

LONDON TRAVELWATCH

Business Plan and Budget Bid 2015-16

A. Introduction

London TravelWatch is the independent consumer body responsible under a series of statutes for representing the interests of all who use public transport in London. It is accountable to, and funded by, the London Assembly. It covers all modes of transport, and its work is underpinned by a series of statutory powers and duties. In particular, it must:

- consider and make recommendations relating to matters brought to its notice by users and transport providers or which it considers merit investigation
- respond to essential consultations on behalf of transport users
- undertake research and investigation into issues of concern, and
- act as an appeals body for consumers who have been unable to resolve their complaints with service providers.

It delivers these statutory responsibilities through its casework and policy teams and the close synergy between these teams is an important feature of its work. It is, for example, crucially important for caseworkers to have easy access to expert knowledge to help resolve complex appeals. On the policy and investigation side, a wide range of evidence, including primary and secondary research, is used to inform the organisation's work, but important policy-related issues emerging from casework also provide a key input to London TravelWatch's work.

The major challenge for London in the next 20 to 30 years will be to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding and changing city. The 2011 Census results showed that there had been a much larger growth in population than forecast in the London Plan. This has led to a review of population projections by the GLA that are much higher than previously assumed, up from 8.2 million in 2011 to 9.84 million by 2031. The growth in population and employment will result in a projected increase in overall travel to 30 million trips a day in 2031, up from 27 million. The projected growth in population and travel will need to be matched by increases in transport capacity.

Enabling employment growth in central London remains very important as central London will remain the driver of London's economy. Currently 30% of London's jobs are in 2% of London's area and, though there are agglomeration benefits in having high numbers of workers in one central employment area, this requires a dense network of rail, tube and bus routes into the centre. Rising housing costs combined with changes to benefit entitlement mean that many people on low incomes who

work in central London are having to move to areas of outer London and beyond with cheaper housing. High rail and tube fares can mean that many people have to rely on cheaper modes of travel such as buses despite the far longer journey times. Any reduction in bus service levels in outer London or in bus journey time reliability will impact disproportionately on low income groups.

The Mayor will be addressing these challenges through 'Planning for London's Future' and success can only be achieved through a careful and well-co-ordinated mix of short, medium and long term actions by a wide range of agencies. It will be particularly important to get maximum value from the current transport infrastructure.

2015-16 will be an important year on many counts. There will be changes to the way that London Underground (LUL) deploys staff on Tube stations, new franchises and concessions, and changes to the way passengers pay for travel. In addition to this, there will be a general election which may bring changes to transport policy and, in London, thoughts will be turning to changes that might come following the 2016 Mayoral elections.

Works will continue to upgrade London's ageing infrastructure and new schemes such as Crossrail will be developed to improve and expand capacity to try and keep up with growth in the number of passengers, as well as to improve connectivity further afield. We welcome the infrastructure improvements but they will be accompanied by years of major disruption for transport users, including for those who may not directly benefit from them.

London TravelWatch will have a critical role to play in ensuring that consumer interests remain at the forefront of government thinking at both project planning and implementation stages, and then working to ensure they remain so. Policy makers, providers and operators need to remain flexible as, inevitably, changing circumstances can mean all concerned need to adapt and refocus. As a watchdog, it is essential that London TravelWatch is able to monitor progress and challenge operators to work together as effectively as possible; both on planned and unplanned disruption, to ensure that passenger interests are not compromised as complex projects are delivered across London. The industry showed what it could do during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, working together to deal with problems as well as forward planning, and we expect even more from them when dealing with the huge strategic challenges ahead.

Transport is likely to feature as a major issue in the next election, especially in and around London, and we expect further pressure to drive down costs. We must ensure that passengers have a voice and that on their behalf we remain alert to how new initiatives could impact on consumers, especially those who are less likely to speak for themselves. These initiatives include ticket office changes, cashless buses, contactless ticketing, changes to bus services, night tube operation, highways maintenance and more.

General approach to this business plan

London TravelWatch is strongly committed to working collaboratively with the Transport Committee and we will continue to align work plans where practicable and

to prioritise requests to provide evidence to the Committee's scrutinies and investigations. Where resources permit, we will play our part in following up on some of the recommendations arising from its work, monitoring progress made by operators (particularly TfL) in implementing these.

We will continue to work within the framework of the corporate strategy we developed in 2011 but we have updated our strategic priorities to reflect the new transport challenges facing London, especially the major issue of capacity constraints at a time of tight public spending control. The Board will continue to use its prioritisation criteria to help focus our resources on areas where we can have the most impact.

Our mission and values form an important context for how we work and earlier this year, after detailed consideration from both staff and Board, they were updated and a set of behaviours to demonstrate them were agreed. London TravelWatch will continue to work in accordance with these - putting the consumer view, challenging the industry where appropriate and championing the interests of the travelling public – but always ensuring that our work remains evidence based and our decision making is independent.

This business plan sets out the key areas of work the organisation will be undertaking in 2015-16 within the context of our strategic priorities. London TravelWatch will continue to work within its mission and values, reproduced as appendix 1. Our strategic priorities and corporate strategy are set out in appendix 2 and our budget bid for 2015-16 is attached as appendix 3.

B. Strategic priorities

On behalf of transport users we will work to ensure that:

- London has a transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service.
- All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities.
- The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys.
- We support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capability on the network, promoting infrastructure changes that will help do this.
- Our work is delivered by an efficient and responsive organisation.

Underpinning all our work will be our belief that passengers should get the best value for money possible for the price they pay for their ticket and that they should have easy access to an effective complaints service from all transport operators, backed up by a robust appeals system when they are not satisfied.

C. Objectives for 2015-16

How the organisation will address these issues, as well as other key work areas, is set out below within the context of our five strategic objectives.

1. A transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service

- Promote good practice at transport interchanges – mystery shopping selected locations to identify best practice and highlight those that fall short of the standards transport users expect.
- Work to improve accessibility by encouraging transport decision makers, providers and operators to take further action - on the railways by doing more to mitigate the impact of excessive gaps between trains and platforms; on the buses by pushing local authorities to adopt the more challenging target of making 95% of all bus stops accessible; and on the pavements by highlighting the problems posed to blind and partially sighted pedestrians by pavement obstructions.
- Monitor the impact of changes to the way that London Underground stations are staffed and intervene where there is evidence that passengers' needs are not being adequately met, particularly those of disabled or vulnerable travellers.
- Closely monitor the impact on passengers of major station rebuilding programmes, particularly London Bridge, and continue to speak up on their behalf to help minimise the effect of disruption.
- Encourage transport operators to continuously improve the service they give to passengers and monitor TfL's progress in addressing any issues arising from the Transport Committee's investigation into TfL's customer service standards.
- Continue work to understand the needs of passengers at small stations and suggest how these could be better met.
- Continue to investigate the impact of the cost of travel on low income families and, in partnership with Trust for London and London Councils, promote measures to mitigate this.
- Track the legislative and decision making process for HS2, speaking out at appropriate points to ensure that London passenger interests are properly taken into account in relation to Euston and Old Oak Common stations.
- Work to ensure that the investment in Crossrail brings maximum benefit to passengers – that stations are accessible and well-connected with local bus services.

2. All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities

- Continue to give bus passengers a voice. As a minimum, we will continue to build up our online bus community and to support up to three new bus user groups whilst they develop.
- Monitor closely the new rail franchises on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern and Essex Thameside routes to ensure the services they provide meet the needs of passengers as promised in the franchise bid, and provide input from the London passenger perspective to the Greater Anglia franchise before it is tendered.
- Provide input to and monitor progress on direct award rail franchises to ensure services meet the needs of passengers as promised in the terms of the franchise award (Southeastern, South West Trains and First Great Western).
- Provide input to new rail concessions on the DLR, London Overground and Crossrail, especially as additional National Rail stations and services are transferred to TfL on London Overground and Crossrail.
- Give input from the consumer perspective as preparations are made for the transfer of stations and services from Greater Anglia to London Overground and Crossrail. Continue to advocate an independent baseline study to identify the wider economic and other benefits that arise from devolution of rail services to the Mayor.
- Take opportunities that arise to promote planning for better access by public transport to airports, healthcare and education services, particularly when new or reconfigured services or facilities are being planned, as well as to major new housing, enterprise or retail developments.
- Update our key priorities for transport users to use in discussions with candidates and their teams in the run up to the 2016 Mayoral elections.

3. The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys

- Continue to provide a consumer perspective on the multi-agency Travel Demand Management Board set up to coordinate passenger communications during planned disruption. Encourage the wider application of this way of working to respond to incidents of unplanned service disruption.
- Use our influence to try and accelerate the extension of the Oyster pay as you go or Contactless smartcards to Gatwick, Luton and Stansted Airports and other stations within the London Railway area.

- Monitor and evaluate the impact on passengers of new ways of paying for travel like cashless buses, contactless cards, and part-time season tickets.
- Identify and work to resolve any issues arising from the extension of different National Rail ITSO smartcards onto the London transport network.
- Encourage transport operators to be more transparent with passengers about the circumstances in which penalty fares are levied and to raise awareness of the importance of having a valid ticket or touching in with Oyster pay as you go or contactless smartcards before travelling.
- Negotiate to ensure that new ticket machines are designed to be user-friendly and encourage operators to adopt consistent design principles so that passengers develop greater confidence in using these.
- Promote ticketing arrangements for Crossrail that are simple and easy for passengers to understand, wherever they are travelling to or from.

4. Support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capacity on the network and promote infrastructure changes that will help to do this

- Promote suggestions we have made previously about how to increase overall capacity on the existing bus network by relatively small improvements which make best use of current assets.
- Monitor TfL bus priority measures and the impact of these.
- Monitor timetable changes from January 2015 onwards (especially on the Thameslink and Southeastern routes and others affected by services at London Bridge) and how these affect passengers.
- Provide a passenger input to plans to improve Bank station in 2020 and to other upgrades and extensions to the Underground network.
- Contribute to the Mayor's Roads Task Force in relation to gyratories and conduct a series of case studies to consider particular locations from the different modal perspectives.
- Monitor the effectiveness of changes to the cycling infrastructure in improving safety for cyclists as well as the impact these have on other road users
- Use our influence to ensure that Crossrail 2 is developed with passenger needs considered as a key element of the planning process.

5. An efficient and responsive organisation

Communications

We will continue to focus our communications work on influencing key debates and targeting our resources on the most significant audiences. We will prioritise continuing our regular dialogue with key stakeholders and decision-makers to ensure that the transport user voice in London is heard when decisions are made. We will continue to highlight the impact that our work achieves.

Board

We will continue to strengthen the strategic role of the Board through our streamlined committee structures and high quality briefing papers. The terms of appointment of our current Chair and Board all expire at the end of 2016. During 2015-16 we will discuss with the Transport Committee their arrangements for recruitment of new Members and recommend mechanisms that are most likely to give a smooth transition. We will plan a comprehensive induction programme for new Members.

Staffing

Staff remain our key resource and we aim to be an excellent employer. The award of the Investors in People accreditation at Silver status earlier this year provided external confirmation that our investment in staff development is well aligned with our business objectives. We aim to further improve as an organisation and will continue to use the liP framework to assist us in doing so.

For several years we have supported employment more widely by providing secondment opportunities for the intern schemes run by Network Rail but this year we have directly employed a school leaver as an apprentice under the Government scheme.

We continue to pay the London Living Wage and this year were externally accredited for this. We have also joined the Cycle to Work Scheme.

We will continue to ensure we get best value in all that we do. This year we entered into a shared services agreement with the London Pensions Fund Authority for our senior finance work and we will continue to be alert to any other such opportunities where we are sure that there are real cost savings to be made.

Our permanent staffing establishment remains at 15.6 full time equivalent posts. The current staff structure is attached as appendix 4.

Partnerships and additional resources

London TravelWatch will continue to find ways of making its budget go further by working in partnership with other stakeholders. We have always worked closely with organisations such as Passenger Focus and will continue to build closer working relationships with organisations such as Transport for All, London Councils, Age UK, RNIB and Trust for London.

Premises

In November, we will move to share premises with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority at their headquarters building in Union Street, SE1.

Risks

London TravelWatch has a comprehensive risk policy and business continuity plan and regularly updates its procedures according to changing circumstances. Risks are reviewed regularly by the Governance Committee. We will continue to refer to the organisation's published prioritisation criteria before committing time and resources to new projects to avoid the risk of spreading resources too thinly in response to the many and rising calls on time.

Reserves

For a small organisation entirely dependent on an annual grant, maintaining an adequate level of reserves is essential to ensure that core operating activities can continue during periods of activity involving exceptional levels of unplanned expenditure. London TravelWatch continues to review its reserves policy annually.

JC/26.9.14

London TravelWatch Mission and Values

Mission

London TravelWatch is the body established by Parliament to be the official voice of transport users in greater London. It has a statutory role in the appeals and consultations process, and in putting the transport user view on transport issues, to improve the experience of travelling in and around the capital.

Values

London TravelWatch aims to be:

- Independent – we are firmly on the side of the consumer and will not bow to outside pressure.
- Authoritative – our work will be evidence-based, rigorous and respected.
- Open – we will share information, and accept new ideas.
- Collaborative – we will work with stakeholders.
- Inclusive – we will represent all transport users in our area.

Vision

That London TravelWatch is the champion of the travelling public in London, successfully influencing decision-making about travel in our area.

Strategic priorities

Our work will be directed to achieving the following outcomes for transport users:

- London has a transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service.
- All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities.
- The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys.
- We support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capability on the network, promoting infrastructure changes that will help do this.
- Our work is delivered by an efficient and responsive organisation.

Underpinning all our work will be our belief that passengers should get the best value for money possible for the price they pay for their ticket and that they should have easy access to an effective complaints service from all transport operators, backed up by a robust appeals system when they are not satisfied.

Corporate strategy

The strategic priorities that underpin our work are:

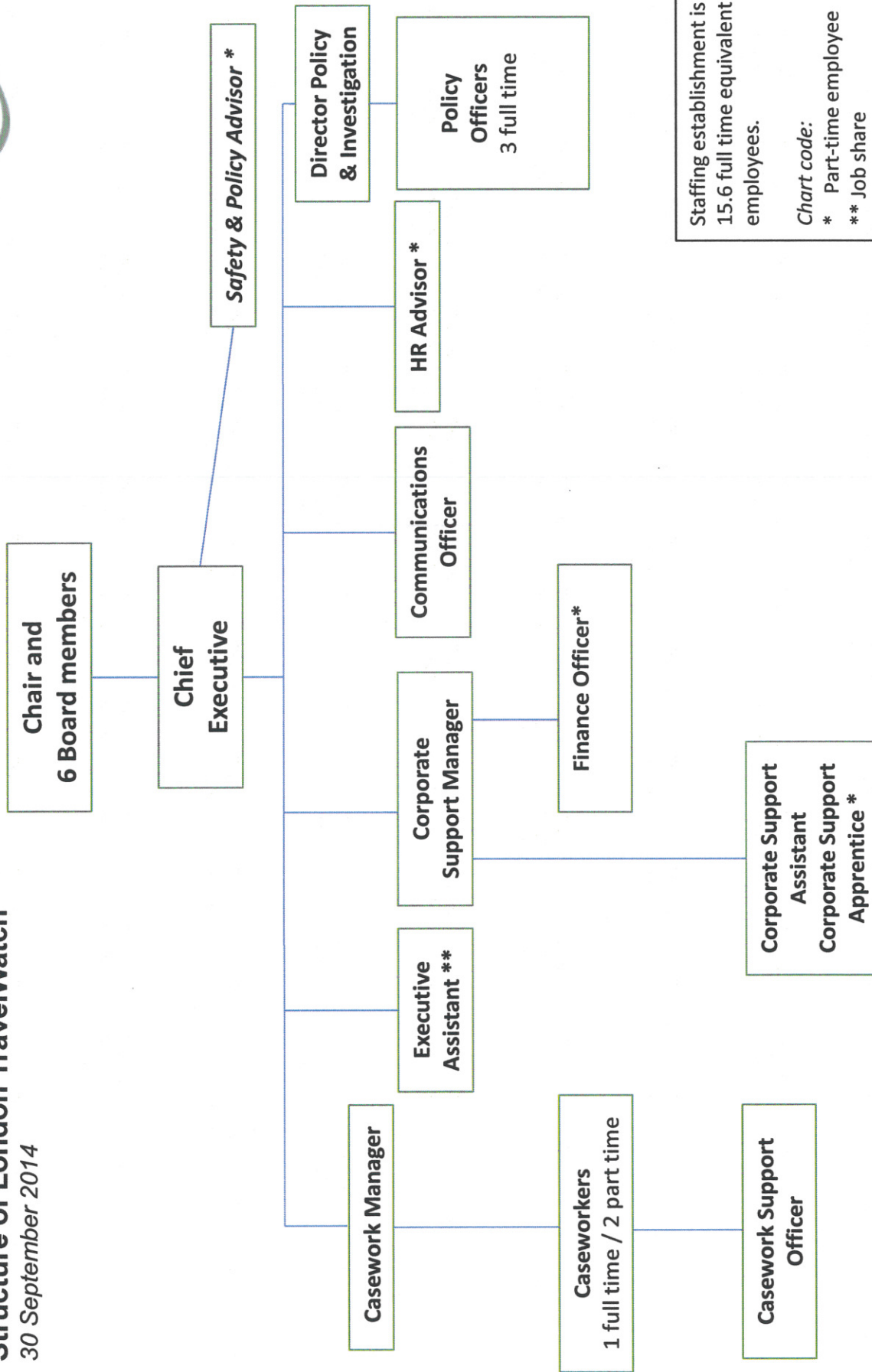
- Maintaining an efficient system for handling appeals casework and for responding to consultations.
- Developing an independent evidence base of the views and needs of current and future transport users in London, especially those facing barriers to travel.
- Maintaining awareness of current transport service and future policy issues in our area.
- Becoming increasingly influential advocates on behalf of the travelling public to policy makers, regulators and operators.
- Building effective partnerships with stakeholders where it is in the interests of travellers to do so.
- Ensuring transport users feel their concerns are represented.
- Further developing as an efficient and responsive organisation.

Appendix 3

London TravelWatch Budget Submission 2015/16	
£k Corporate Plan 15/16	2015/16 £000
2014/15 Budget (including use of reserves)	1,100.6
Budget requirement pre growth and savings (below)	1,056.4
Unavoidable growth:	
Accommodation costs:	0.0
Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay:	11.5
Members' costs- non-pay	0.0
Other Staff related costs-non-pay	0.0
Supplies & Services	0.0
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	0.0
Total unavoidable growth	11.5
Projected Savings:	
Accommodation costs	6.5
Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay	0.0
Members' costs- non-pay	0.8
Other Staff related costs-non-pay	6.9
Supplies & Services	23.2
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	18.3
Total savings	55.7
Application of reserves	0.0
Budget Requirement-after growth and savings	1,056.4
Guideline target	1,056.4
Excess over guideline	0.0
NB Growth and savings in the same headings have been offset above.	

Appendix 4

Structure of London TravelWatch
30 September 2014



Staffing establishment is 15.6 full time equivalent employees.

Chart code:
* Part-time employee
** Job share