

# London **TravelWatch**



*The voice of London transport users*

***Influencing our main stakeholders***

***Janet Cooke, Chief Executive***

# What is London TravelWatch?

- Non-political, independent consumer body set up under the 1999 Greater London Authority Act to represent transport users in and around London. London Assembly fund us, appoint our Board and agree our business plan each year
- Multi-modal remit – all of Transport for London (TfL) services (buses, Underground, trams, Docklands Light Railway, social needs transport, Oystercard/Contactless ticketing, TfL roads - pedestrians, cyclists and motorists- etc). Also rail passengers in London and its commuter belt (including four airports)
- Comprehensive remit – Appeals, research, consultee
- Particular expertise in transport interchanges/integrated ticketing – travel in London is highly integrated

## In other words . . .

- We have to deal with issues raised by or on behalf of transport users – appeals by users unhappy with how the operator dealt with their complaint; statutory consultee in respect of changes to transport infrastructure or services; a statutory role in railway closures and conduct research and investigation
- We represent 13m people making 3.5bn journeys pa
- Our budget has been cut by more than a third over the past few years yet the numbers of people we represent continues to grow – so we have to carefully prioritise what we do and how we work
- We have no formal powers – so have to rely entirely on influence to achieve our aims – but all operators are required to engage with us, and **most** (generally) do

## Our stakeholders

- **Political** - Mayor, London Assembly, Members of Parliament, Local councils - and their staff
- **Industry** - TfL; Train operators, Network Rail, Rail regulator, British Transport Police, Surface access teams at airports, bidders
- **Advocacy groups** – disability, cycling, Trust for London, user groups, Transport Focus, EPF, Bus Users UK, London Councils, etc
- **Passengers**, service users and general public

# Influencing our main stakeholders

- The first two are critical in terms of achieving improvements for users – the others we aim to keep in touch with, listen to or work with rather than specifically seeking to influence
- Much more emphasis now on political stakeholders
- Focussing on influence rather than profile is more satisfying and more effective in achieving our aims
- Over the past four years we have been systematically working to improve our ability to influence our key stakeholders
- Improving influence has helped raise our profile

# Key elements of our approach

- Decision to go for influence rather than profile
- Core values – demonstrably independent and evidence based. User focused
- Clear sense of what we want to achieve
- Prioritisation criteria
- Consistent branding – visual and ways of working
- Focus our messages / nuance the wording for the recipient
- Watch timing – but take opportunities that arise
- Better use of our website and social media
- Monitor impact of our communications

## Key aims

- Our transport users' priorities, which we update four yearly ahead of the London Mayoral elections provide us with an easy crib sheet



# Influencing the industry

- **Operators** - regular meetings at all levels with different TfL modes and train companies to try and secure improvements. Held in confidence to enable frank discussion. This ongoing dialogue is core to how we work.
- **Casework team** – a lot of work on relationship management with TfL and TOC customer service teams, improves our ability to negotiate successful outcomes on individual appeals.
- **Bidders for DfT and TfL contracts** – always keen to come and discuss our research / views on improvements needed. Even handed to all.
- **Give evidence** to London Assembly and Government scrutinies and input to TfL and DfT major consultations.
- **Best practice seminars** – a new approach but successful.



# Influencing London government

- **Mayor** – Aim to influence manifestos of key candidates. Then the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Maintain contact with office.
- **London Assembly** – A critical relationship for us. Meet Chair of Transport Committee every 3-4 months to discuss our work. Also aim to develop a relationship with rest of this committee, also all constituency AMs, so they understand us and we know their concerns.
- **Local councils** – 33 London boroughs, do most of our influencing via TfL as the strategic transport authority but also meet on individual issues of concern. County councils around London is more issue based, we hold one public Board meeting outside London each year.

# Influencing National Government

- **Transport ministers** – try to meet 1-2 a year to discuss the London passenger experience and lobby for improvement based on our research.
- **London MPs / Lords** – insufficient resources for systematic targeting but make contact where see they are campaigning on an issue where we share concern.
- **DfT officials** (and national organisations such as Network Rail) – ongoing challenge to maintain relationships in times of so much change. Critical to ensure the particular needs of London passengers are not ignored.

# Branding - visual

We commission one piece of professional design work a year which reflects - London, users, multimodal, recent activity



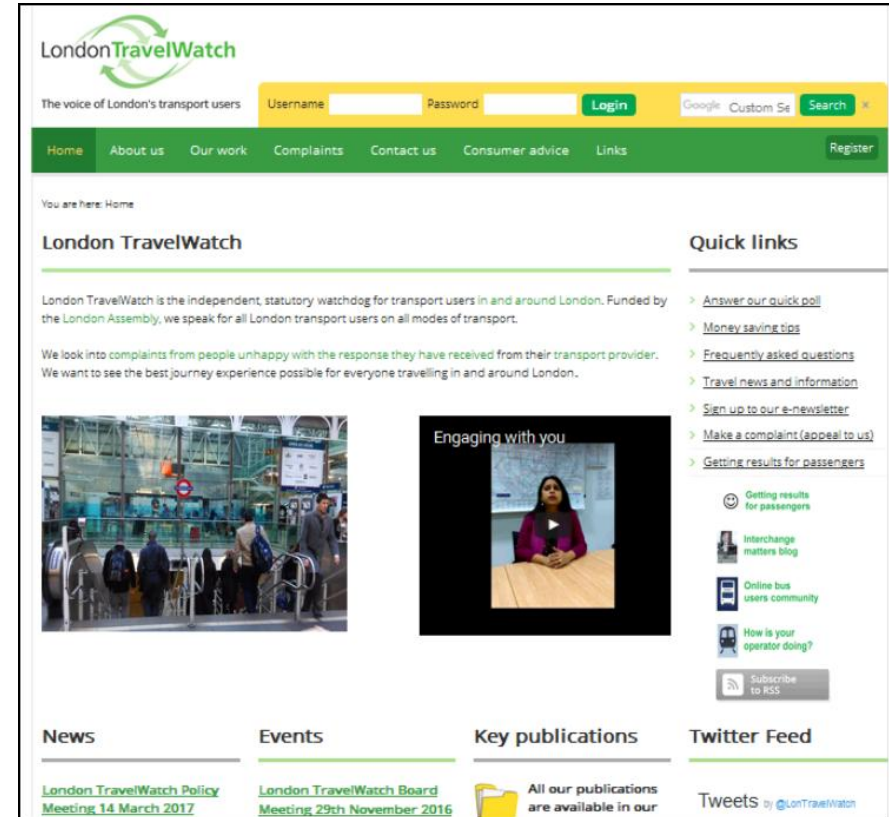
# Branding – ways of working

- ‘Bottom-up’, highly practical approach – illustrate problems and offer solutions
- Always from the user perspective
- High quality work, well presented
- All our work is evidence based – from a wide range of sources
- Our work is demonstrably independent
- Consistent approach
- Friendly, professional and value for money
- Connected with those we represent – we all commute in and around London and pay for our own travel - keeps us in touch

# Widening and reinforcing our impact

- Our website is a low cost and effective method of communication
- We can see what our visitors find useful and track our impact
- We use Twitter to get our message out and live tweet our public meetings
- Regularly experiment with new ways of engaging

[www.londontravelwatch.org.uk](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk)



## Monitoring impact

- We monitor the impact of our influencing in a quarterly report to our Board (copied to staff)
- This looks at the impact in terms of outcomes for passengers
- It records likely reach of any media coverage
- Evaluates success of any events
- It also provides an analysis of website traffic and social media activity
- It summarises events/meetings attended.

## Some of the challenges

- Political or organisational changes – may need to start again
- It's often difficult to demonstrate externally how we influenced change – everyone claims the best ideas!!
- Internal communication is essential so that all staff what we are aiming to achieve (and how) so we all 'sing from the same hymn sheet'
- We don't have the resources to do as much informal networking as we would like
- Need to take a long view – achieving change may take years
- The wider our impact the more likely we are to be criticised – especially on social media where many comments can be 'inaccurate'. It's difficult to stand back and say nothing but there are some arguments we cannot win
- Transport in London is highly politicised – need to tread carefully
- Reputations are hard won and easily lost!!

## Achieving positive outcomes

- Delay Repay Compensation for National Rail passengers after 15 mins - bringing it into line with the Underground
- Mayor used us to review the impact on passengers of closing ticket offices on the Underground – accepted all our recommendations. Huge impact and will influence rail as well
- DfT now using our work to help inform their franchising process
- Ongoing work from us to improve bus stop accessibility led to the previous Mayor setting a target of 75% to be accessible – just reached 94%
- We got the need to remove pavement clutter onto the agenda in local authorities, at TfL and it is now a priority for the new Mayor – close working with Royal National Institute for the Blind on this
- Improving surface access to London's airports – released research in 2014 to coincide with report on new runway. Continues to make an impact



## Overall aim to achieve ...



*A better experience for the travelling public in London*