
**-Confidential- Board member
memorandum**

Agenda item: 15
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London TravelWatch website

1 General

- 1.1. As agreed at the Governance Committee, I had a good look at the new website. The general architecture of the site seems good and it is also good that there is now a photograph on the home page. The type could be a bit bigger; I suspect that older people in particular will have some difficulty with it. Larger type might mean we had to drop something from the home page; my candidate would be "Have your say", which could go under "quick links". Gail may also have some comments on design.
- 1.2. It is helpful to have lots of links from the home page. But they will only work if the titles of the links are clear enough for people to understand which one will lead them where they want to go. At present, the titles of the links are not very descriptive and make it quite hard to find what one wants. For instance, when I recently wanted to find board papers, even though I am a long-time user of the internet and am usually very good at finding my way around websites, I could not find them until Jo pointed me in the right direction. In her email, she kindly offered the services of herself or Keletha to go through the main parts of the site with me. This is not right; the website should be so clear that even less experienced web users than myself can find their way around without guidance. And if we get the website right, it should save on telephone calls.
- 1.3. I have put myself in the position of an averagely website literate punter and tried to think what I would find easy. I start with the links in the bar along the front.

2 Home page: top bar

- 2.1. There are now clever drop down menus, which is good. However, to get to info about LTW, you have to click on "Home". Anybody going onto our website automatically gets to the home page, and I don't think it will occur to anybody on the home page to click on "Home" to find out about the organisation. I suggest dropping the drop down menu from "Home", and inserting a separate link on the bar called "About us". This is common for organisational websites to have, and therefore has the virtue of familiarity. I know there is another link below called "learn about LTW", but something obvious at the top would be better - and "About us" is better wording as it is neutral as well as familiar.
- 2.2. I suggest also that all the drop down menus avoid your having to click on the item actually on the bar to get one of the items on the menu. The present arrangement is

not a usual website way of doing things (which is to bring up the complete menu when you hover) and will I think confuse people. So, for instance, when you hover over "Complaints", you currently get only one item on the drop-down menu, namely "Appeals". We need a drop down menu with both the two items actually set out on the drop down part: i.e. "Complaints" (or "How to complain") and "Appeals". The "consumer advice" link would, for instance, have a drop down menu with the items "Advice/Money saving tips"; and "Your rights".

- 2.3. The link called "Our work", which is in fact not about our work at all, but a link to the documents, would be better titled "Documents and Publications". (I know the documents represent an important part of our work, but it is not what most people expect to see when they click on a link called "our work" - this is normally the link that tells you about what the organisation does.) The important thing is I think that there is a single prominent link to all documents and publications, as most people won't know if many things are classified as documents or as publications. There could then be a drop-down menu which leads one to the different types of documents and publications, including board papers (and a link to LTW press releases).
- 2.4. The link called "What's on" leads to the calendar of our meetings. Fascinating though they are, this is not I suspect what most people will be expecting when they click on a link as excitingly titled as "What's on". I suggest it be retitled "Meetings" or "Calendar". If there is a really exciting event other than a meeting, it can be put in the news bit.
- 2.5. Finally, we really must have a "Contact us" link on the top bar. It sets a terrible example for a consumer organisation not to have this up front (as opposed to being hidden away in the small type under "Quick links") when we are encouraging others to make it easy to contact them.
- 2.6. The result of these suggestions would be to have the following links from the top bar:
 - Home
 - About us
 - Calendar
 - News
 - Complaints
 - Consumer advice
 - Documents and Publications
 - Consultations
 - Contact us.

3 Home page: Have your say

- 3.1. This is a rather mystifying bit of the home page. I assume the intention is that the questions on the home page will change at regular intervals. But it is not clear

whether the question appearing on the website is part of a wider survey or if we want people to answer other questions. There is a link called "see all results", but when you click on the it, what you get is not just results but another opportunity to answer the same question, plus another two other unrelated question. I suggest the link be retitled something like "More poll questions and results so far".

4 Home page: links at the bottom

- 4.1. The bottom half of the page seems to me to be generally along the right lines. I would, however, suggest that the heading "Publications" be changed to "Recent publications" so as to avoid people thinking these links will lead them to all our publications. I know using two words will make the design less neat - but clarity should always take precedence over design.
- 4.2. It is confusing to have "How to complain" listed both under Publications and under Quick Links. It ought to be deleted from one or the other, preferably from publications, especially as we want to direct people who come to the web to the much more complete electronic version of "How to Complain". The paper version can appear on the detailed documents and publications list.
- 4.3. Incidentally, I notice that only three of the most downloaded items from last month can be accessed directly from the home page. The missing ones are the TfL performance report and the Board agenda (which I assume is because we do not have a board meeting coming up)). It seems to me that we ought to ensure that the most wanted items are easily accessible from the home page (except for staff recruitment).
- 4.4. When you click on "Contact us" at the bottom of the "quick links", there are three further links. One is said to be to the complaints page but in fact leads to an online form, as does the second. The first is I imagine just a glitch that can easily be corrected. But the online complaint form is in fact an online appeal form, and I suggest it be called this to avoid confusion.

5 Complaints menu: How to Complain

- 5.1. Jo and I went to a lot of trouble to produce a really good electronic "How to Complain" guide, but this has been replaced on the new website by a PDF of the printed booklet. This makes little sense; PDF is a clumsy format, not necessarily accessible to all our visitors; and it is particularly problematic in this instance as people coming to the website first have to bring up the PDF and then go back to the web page for the links to the operators. We also agreed at the beginning of this exercise that it would make sense to have separate, specially tailored, web and printed versions of "how to complain", as people look at things differently on the web and the constraints are different.
- 5.2. I gather that the PDF version was put on the new website because Jo was given to understand that the Committee had changed its mind (which I am pretty sure is not the case) and wanted the web version exchanged for an editable pdf version of the leaflet. Although Jo was, not surprisingly, unhappy with this, she naturally did what she understood the committee to want. She confirms that it would be easy enough to revert to an HTML version and is going to send me the old one so that we can work up something suitable.

6 Complaints menu: appeals

- 6.1. When you click on "Complaints" -"Appeals" on the top bar, there is a link to a guide called "dealing with your complaint". I suspect this is rather an old document. It is uninformative and repetitious of stuff elsewhere and I suggest it be deleted and any useful material in it not reproduced elsewhere put as part of the text on the Appeals page.

7 Consumer Advice menu: Your rights: lost property

- 7.1. This page (accessible from the top bar) has a bit at the bottom on lost property, which is fine - although I am not sure that I would naturally look under the heading "Your rights" to find out about lost property. However, we are told that a significant number of the calls handled by LTW are from people wanting to know where to go for lost property. I thought we had agreed in one of the committees that we would put numbers for lost property prominently on our website so that people called the right place rather than us. May I suggest that there is a prominent link on the home page to this bit of the website, perhaps the second item under "quick links". And it might be worth repeating the link to lost property on the "contact us" page.
- 7.2. We really ought also to help the consumer by putting a proper list of numbers for people to call - the present links from the lost property section mostly lead to general websites full of stuff about engineering works etc.

8 Consultations Menu

- 8.1. This is another item on the top bar where there is a confusing drop down menu. Most people would not think of clicking on the word "Consultations" in the bar once the drop-down menu has come up - yet if one does, there is a nice little explanatory text. Although I like drop-down menus in their place, this is a case where I suggest we should not have a drop down menu. Instead, those clicking on "Consultations" would be led to the explanatory text with a sub-menu on the same page, giving further links to consultations by mode as on the current drop-down.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1. A lot of the links lead one to pages that contain a lot of interesting material, but no introductory text explaining what it is. For instance, when one clicks on "News", one just gets a long list of other links to documents whose status is not clear (in fact I think they are LTW press releases). When someone has time (and I am happy to offer myself), we need to go through each page systematically and make sure that anybody entering it is told clearly what they will find there.
- 9.2. I know staff are all hard-pressed and under stress. But the website is one of our main faces to the world. It is not bad at present compared to many other websites. But it could be made very good indeed with a number of relatively minor changes. I think it particularly urgent to get the links on the home pages retitled in a more understandable way; to get a reference to lost property on the home page; and to get the electronic "how to Complain" back up. I hope that, subject to the views of other board members, these can be looked at as a matter of urgency.