

London TravelWatch

The Role of Board members

1. Members are the Board. You determine the general policy and direction of London TravelWatch by the decisions you take at meetings. Decisions taken at previous meetings (possibly by your predecessors as members) remain London TravelWatch policy until and unless they are changed at a later meeting. The Secretariat works on the basis of the decisions taken by the Board and the policies set out in publications such as 'Towards Transport Excellence'.
2. All members are members of the Board and are expected to make every effort to attend its all-day meetings. You will be expected to serve on a range of subsidiary bodies and you may be asked to take the lead on certain aspects of the Board's work. You will be expected to take an active role as an ambassador for the Board at meetings with various stakeholders.
3. You will automatically receive (either by e-mail or as a hard copy, depending on what you have requested) the agenda of any subsidiary body that the Board may decide to set up (except the Executive Group which will be asked to consider items that are confidential). You will automatically receive all the papers relating to subsidiary bodies on which you serve. You can request any of the papers to be considered by any subsidiary bodies on which you do not serve (except the Executive Group). You may attend any subsidiary body (except the Executive Group), but only formal members will be entitled to vote. If you are not a member of a particular subsidiary body but you wish to attend a specific meeting, you are asked to advise the Senior Committee Administrator in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
4. It is Board policy to provide a light lunch for members attending meetings held at the Board's offices that are scheduled to begin anytime between 1200 and 1345 or are scheduled to finish between 1230 and 1400.
5. An assessment as to whether you have met the requirements of membership of the Board vis-à-vis attendance at meetings will be based on your attendance of meetings of the Board and such subsidiary bodies as you have agreed to serve on. Voluntary attendance at other meetings will not be taken into account. This may sound a bit harsh but the Board's Rules of procedure set quora for meetings and we must encourage members to turn up at meetings they have committed themselves to attend, at which we frequently have external visitors. It can be embarrassing if we have to cancel a meeting at short notice because we suddenly find it will be inquorate. If you find that you will not be able to attend a meeting at which your presence is expected, please advise the Senior Committee Administrator as soon as you know you won't be able to attend.
6. Before meetings you will need to spend time briefing yourself on the items on the agenda. Usually there will be reports prepared by members of the Secretariat and sometimes by you or your fellow members. If there is a presentation from a transport provider there may be an advance briefing paper.

7. Documents sent to you on yellow paper are confidential and should not be revealed to non-members of the Board. If a confidential document is despatched by e-mail it will be watermarked accordingly. Documents sent to you on green paper require a response – a ‘no comment’ response is preferable to a non-response.
8. It is worth remembering that except for administrative matters to do with the running of the organisation, London TravelWatch has few powers, certain rights and some duties. We succeed in influencing decisions taken by others through persistent, logical argument and our reputation. These limitations make it vital that we have good, but not cosy, working relationships with those we seek to influence. Unnecessarily intemperate comments at meetings can undermine what the Board seeks to achieve!
9. In addition to attendance and participation at formal meetings you will be invited to ad hoc meetings, site visits, seminars etc.. These stem either from the Board’s own desire to press its concerns on a particular matter, or because members want to become better informed, or because a service provider wants to meet the Board to seek our views/support on an issue, or merely as a regular bi-lateral to keep in touch. These less formal meetings are usually only attended by a small number of members and the invitations to attend are determined on the basis of known member interest and/or local knowledge. Do not worry if you cannot accept all the invitations you receive to attend meetings – if you cannot attend then another member will be asked to go instead and if no-one can attend on the proposed date then, if the meeting is important enough, we will try to re-arrange it.
10. From time to time you might be asked to assist in survey work being undertaken as part of the Board’s research programme. This work is vital to gaining a deeper understanding of the issues facing our ‘constituency’ and past experience suggests that such activities result in real camaraderie amongst those involved.
11. A member of the Secretariat will attend all formal meetings of the Board. At less formal meetings and in particular meetings with local stakeholders you may find yourself attending meetings alone. You are asked to provide a brief report of issues raised at such meetings and it would be helpful if these reports could be on the pro-forma meetings report document to ensure consistency.
12. If you have a query about any aspect of the transport within the Board’s remit you can raise it as a Members’ Enquiry. If your concern merely requires limited corrective action – e.g. updating a timetable at a bus stop – then we do not expect the operator to reply. More substantive issues should result in your receiving a detailed response from the service provider which you should receive via the Secretariat. (For more information see the section ‘**Casework Procedures**’.
13. As a member you will receive regular mailings from us. Hard copy documents are sent out at least once a week on a Thursday – more frequently if need be. E-versions of documents or alerts drawing your attention to web links will be sent out as and when they are available. You will be invited to tell the Secretariat what you want to receive and how you want to receive documents from us.

Large documents received by us only in hard copy format will not normally be converted to e-format by us.

14. In the despatch room at the London TravelWatch offices you will find a pigeon hole with your name on – do please check it and collect any mail for you when you are in our offices. Very large or bulky items will not normally be sent through the post and will await collection by you.
15. The Chairman, Deputy Chair, Chief Executive and Communications Officer are our main designated press contacts, but requests for interviews may be passed to other members of the Board or Secretariat when appropriate.
16. Once your local media become aware that you are a member of the Board you may be asked to comment on aspect of transport policy. If you do so as a member of the Board you must adhere to Board policy. If you say something that is not in line with Board policy then you must make it clear to the press that you putting forward your personal opinion. In either case it would be helpful if you always inform the Communications Officer as soon as possible after you have spoken to the press. If you intend to issue a local press statement on some aspect of transport policy within the remit of the Board you must clear the content with the Communications Officer before issuing it to the press.

RB – 15.12.06