

Date: 1 November 2017

Item: Crime and Confidence on Public Transport

This paper will be considered in public

1 Purpose

- 1.1 At the TfL Board meeting of 19 September 2017, Members requested a ‘deep dive’ into the increases in crime on public transport and the impact of this on confidence to travel, to be discussed at an appropriate Panel, and this paper is a product of that request.

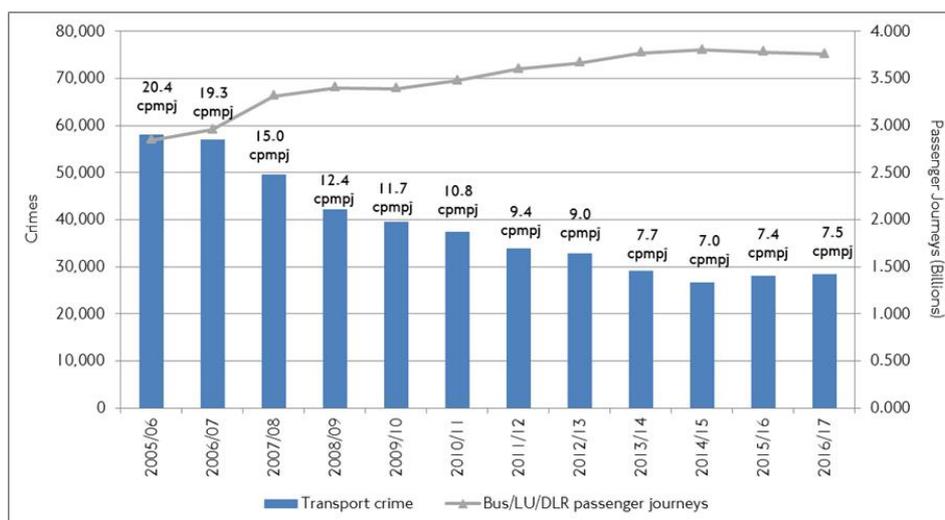
2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

3 Overview of Crime on Public Transport

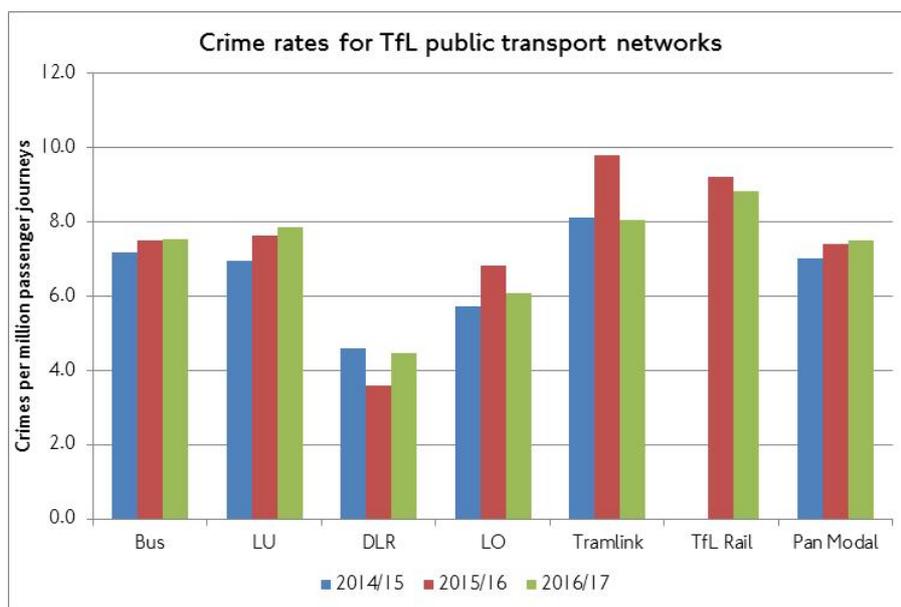
- 3.1 Improving the safety and security of TfL’s public transport networks is a priority for TfL and its transport policing partners – the British Transport Police (BTP), City of London Police (CoLP) and the Metropolitan Police Roads and Transport Policing Command (RTPC). This partnership has been successful in reducing levels of crime and antisocial behaviour on the network, through dedicated, high-visibility neighbourhood policing taking a problem-solving approach that addresses the causes of crime and antisocial behaviour. This approach has seen crime levels - both the volume and rate of crime per million passenger journeys (cpmpj), fall by over 50 per cent between 2005/06 and 2016/17 on the bus, London Underground (LU) and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) networks. Overall, crime on the transport network has fallen by a higher percentage in the period than overall crime in London and the United Kingdom. The most recent crime figures for England and Wales show an increase in all police recorded offences of 13 per cent in the 12 months to June 2017, with even greater rises for violent offences.

Chart 1 Crime per million passenger journeys



3.2 Crime levels fell to a record low in 2014/15 when the rate of crime on TfL’s public transport networks was 7.0 cpmpj. Since then there has been an increase in overall crime levels on TfL’s public transport system. This can mostly be attributed to rises in reported sexual offences, low-level violence and public order offences and criminal damage. The rate of crime in 2016/17 for TfL’s public transport networks was 7.5 cpmpj. Chart 2 shows the rate of crime for each mode.

Chart 2 Crime rates for TfL public transport networks



3.3 Charts 3 and 4 show the volume of crime by mode and changes in the major crime types. The key increases in crime seen on London’s public transport since 2014/15 are covered in more detail below.

Chart 3: Crime volume by mode

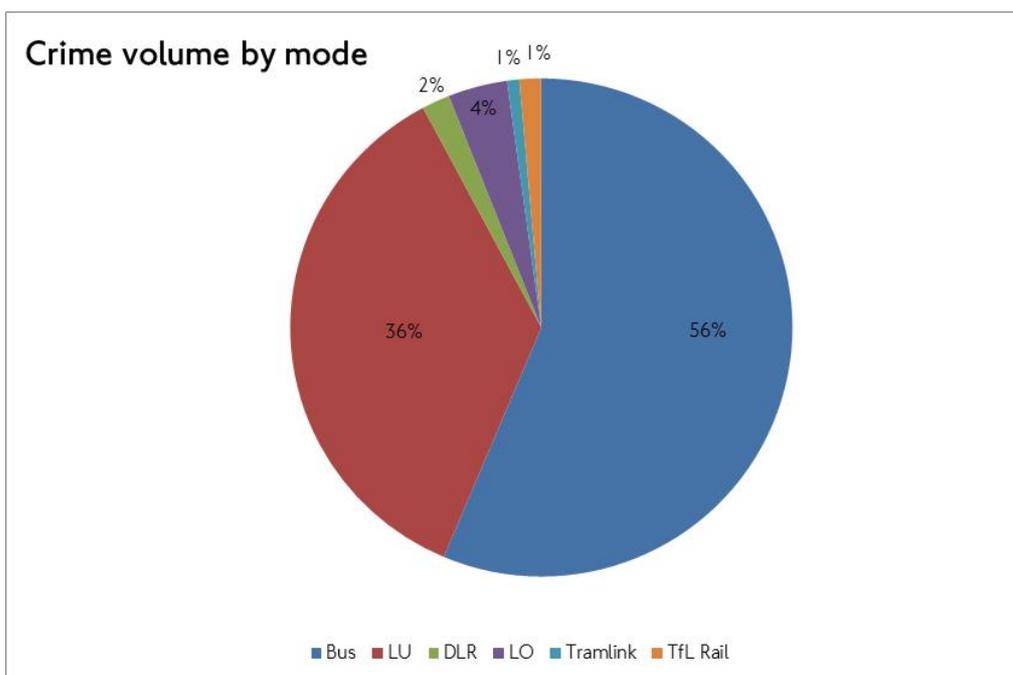
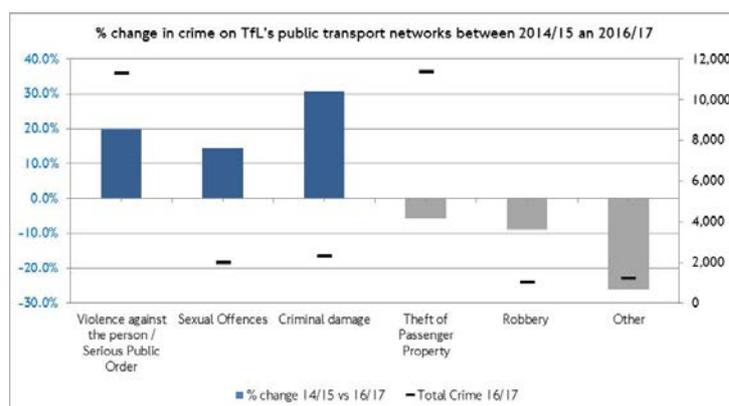


Chart 4: Percentage change in crime on TfL’s public transport networks between 2014/15 and 2016/17



3.4 While the overall levels of transport crime remain relatively low, TfL and its transport policing partners remain focused on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and increasing passenger confidence. However, despite these efforts, reversing the upward trend will be extremely challenging in the context of increasing financial constraints in the public sector and spend on community safety issues, pressure on policing resources, particularly in relation to safeguarding and public protection; the changing nature of the terror threat and the risk that remains to the transport network, as well as the impact of changes in the reporting and recording of certain offences.

4 Sexual Offences

- 4.1 TfL and the police are greatly encouraged by the rise in reporting of sexual offences, which is primarily a result of Project Guardian and the Report It to Stop It campaign (RITSI). Project Guardian, and its media campaign RITSI aims to improve victim confidence to report unwanted sexual behaviour, reduce the risk of becoming a victim, and target offenders. It involves three main strands of activity – enhanced enforcement and investigation, improving victim support and communication activities.
- 4.2 Project Guardian is a partnership initiative established in response to a TfL survey in 2013 that showed 15 per cent of women had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour and 90 per cent of those had not reported it to the police. Since then, TfL and the police have invested significant effort to improve confidence in the reporting of sexual offences on public transport, by challenging norms; naming behaviour that is unacceptable; demonstrating the action that the police take and creating an easy method to report. Sexual offences are widely recognised as being underreported across society.
- 4.3 In line with expectations, the number of sexual offences on London's public transport reported to the police increased by 50 per cent between 2014/15 and 2016/17 – 654 additional offences – and has more than doubled since 2012/13 (the baseline for Project Guardian). There has been a significant increase in arrests for sexual offences between 2014/15 and 2016/17. Despite the increase in the overall volume of reported offences, the rate of sexual offences remains at less than one for every million passenger journeys on each network.
- 4.4 Project Guardian has received very positive feedback and wide public and political support. This is clearly a very important initiative for London's public transport system and delivers on the Mayor's commitment to clamp down on sexual offences on public transport. Eradicating unwanted sexual behaviour from the network – and reducing the number of people who experience this on public transport – remains a priority for TfL and its policing partners. This important work continues.

5 Low-level Violence

- 5.1 TfL's public transport networks have seen an increase in low-level violence and public order offences over recent years, mirroring the trends seen nationally. Police recorded crime across England and Wales rose by 10 per cent in the year to March 2017, with an 18 per cent rise in violent crime and a 35 per cent increase in public order offences. The Office of National Statistics attributes part of this rise to better recording by the police, but also recognises that an element is a genuine increase, especially in the volume of high-harm knife and gun offences in London. The increases seen on TfL's networks can also in part be attributed to better adherence to national standards for crime recording. Improved reporting channels such as the BTP's 61016 text reporting service, making it easier and quicker for victims to report crimes, have also had a small impact. There are very few knife and gun offences on the transport network. Two of the violence offences on

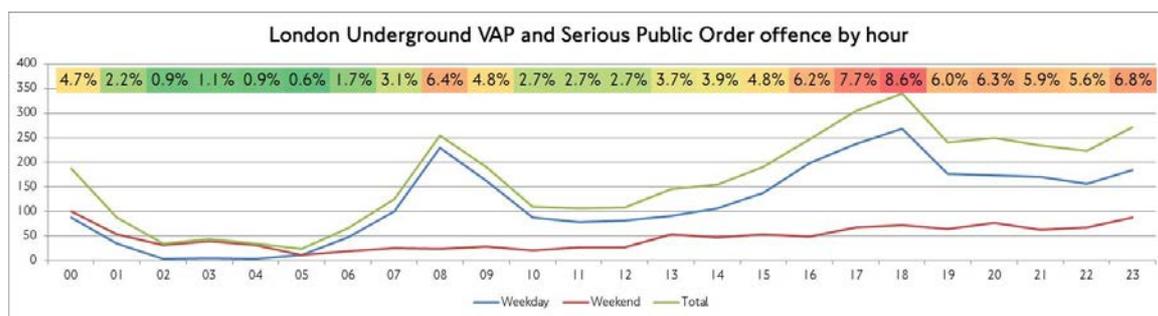


LU/DLR were reported by text. Notwithstanding these explanations there has clearly been an increase in the levels of violence on TfL networks over the past two years.

- 5.2 Over the last year proactive policing efforts, with a strong emphasis on visible policing, engagement with staff, operators and passengers and focused follow up of all reported offences have had a positive impact on reversing the upward trend in levels of violence against the person offences (VAP) on the bus network. These offences on the bus network commonly involve young people and are often school-related. TfL and local Safer Transport Teams from the RTPC have worked in partnership with schools and local authorities to keep young people safe and solve the problems on particular routes and in locations such as East Croydon and Romford. Levels are now stable – at around 16 offences per day. Reducing the risk of violence remains a priority for the RTPC and efforts to drive it down further continue, especially given the rise in motorcycle enabled crime across central London, where passengers waiting at bus stops can be the victim.
- 5.3 The issues on London Underground are more complex and have not followed the recent reversal in trend seen in bus-related crime. On London Underground there has been a year on year increase in low level violence – pushing and shoving, verbal disputes and threatening behaviour – at busy commuter times when services are at peak capacity. This trend has continued into 2017/18. A similar trend has been seen on the London Overground network.
- 5.4 The upward trend in low-level violence presents some significant challenges for policing on London Underground. While there has been a 34 per cent increase in VAP and serious public order offences¹ between 2014/15 and 2016/17 and the increase has continued into 2017/18, the volume of incidents is still relatively low – there were on average around 11 offences per day across the whole of the London Underground network – 2.9 cpmj. BTP crime analysis indicates that in part passenger frustration is leading to increasing aggression between passengers when services are at maximum capacity. The key times for offending on London Underground are morning and afternoon/early evening peaks with a third peak in offences later in the evening (particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings). The incidents are sporadic, with very low levels of repeat victimisation or repeat offending. Offenders often have no previous history of violence, do not share a common profile and the trigger for the incident varies.
- 5.5 The capacity of BTP to prevent, problem-solve and respond to VAP has been limited by the challenging demands for counter terrorism policing, and the introduction of a new operational model (including a different approach to the investigation of crime), introduced by the BTP in April which have impacted on police visibility on the rail and Underground networks in the first half of 2017. TfL has worked with the BTP to mitigate the impact of their organisational changes and has recently secured agreement to restore local policing teams to London Underground. These and other changes should yield positive results and see a slowing down of the trend in violent crime and public order moving into 2018/19.

¹ For BTP, this includes VAP and serious public order. There were some changes to the way that some offences were recorded within the VAP and serious public order offences throughout the year. For the purposes of comparison with previous years, these categories should be combined.

Chart 5: London Underground VAP and Serious Public Order offence by hour



- 5.6 While the introduction of the Night Tube network has contributed to the increase in the number of offences on London Underground, the volume of crime is below the target set of no more than 15 crimes each weekend. Now the Night Tube is fully operational there are around 10 crimes reported on average per weekend. Crime on the Night Tube accounts for around five per cent of crime on London Underground.
- 5.7 Concerted action is underway by London Underground to try to tackle these sporadic, spontaneous low level violence offences including, travel demand management, recurring congestion initiatives, communication activities to encourage improved passenger behaviour and transport capacity improvements. TfL and the BTP are prioritising this issue and ensuring an increased focus on the root causes. These efforts are supported by the London Transport Community Safety Partnership² which is undertaking detailed analysis to support the development of a more cohesive and wide ranging strategic problem-solving action plan, which aims to harness the efforts of all members of the partnership to tackle the issues being experienced at busy commuter times as well as the alcohol related issues which are occurring later in the evening.

6 Criminal Damage

- 6.1 There has also been an increase in criminal damage on TfL's networks since 2014/15. The most notable increase has again been seen on London Underground with the most common offence relating to graffiti on trains. Although the level of offences on London Underground remains low (around 950 offences in 2016/17) with less than one cpmj. this increase combined with the VAP/public order issues set out above remains a concern for TfL. Year to date crime figures for 2017/18 show that the offences have continued to rise compared with the same period last year.
- 6.2 These incidents not only cause economic harm to TfL and the rail industry in terms of repair and disruption but also have an impact on fear of crime and the perception of potential offenders. Work is well advanced with BTP to deal with the upward trend in criminal damage. This includes a partnership to deal robustly with offenders, particularly repeat offenders. TfL is refreshing its graffiti strategy, building on the success of the previous approach to 'tagging' on the London Underground network. London Underground has a rapid response cleaning team in operation to avoid trains with graffiti going out of service. TfL has also introduced video analytical systems that have movement detection and allow

² The London Transport Community Safety Partnership brings together TfL, its policing partners, transport operators, London TravelWatch and other agencies with responsibility for, and influence over crime and antisocial behaviour on public transport.

virtual alarm zones to be set depending on the environment at depot and sidings locations.

- 6.3 Levels of bus-related criminal damage have remained low over the last few years. Crime figures for the first two quarters of 2017/18 are showing a reduction compared with the same period last year.

7 Confidence to Travel

- 7.1 Fear of crime and antisocial behaviour can affect people's confidence, their willingness to travel and can affect their choice of transport mode.
- 7.2 The relationship between crime and fear of crime is complex and a number of studies have indicated that there is not a direct link between the two. Fear of crime is not simply based on the amount of crime taking place but influenced by many other factors. Higher crime levels do not necessarily result in higher levels of fear and vice versa. Fear of crime is often driven by the media profile of incidents and the state of repair of the network itself. Fear can be positively influenced by the behaviour of other passengers, familiarity of the area, state of the environment, and the presence of 'capable guardians'³ who take ownership and control over public space such as a visible member of uniformed staff. In addition, views on and previous experience of the police, perception of the whole journey from door to door, wider social concerns and media reports also contribute to feelings of safety and security. Fear of crime is also highly sensitive to local conditions, time of day as well as an individual's age, gender and ethnicity.
- 7.3 TfL commissions a regular safety and security survey to help monitor perceptions and gain a better understanding of what is influencing those perceptions. Our focus is on understanding Londoners' feelings when travelling on public transport: their experience of incidents and events on and around the transport system which make them worried and the impact on their use of public transport. Research findings helps target resources effectively and inform TfL's community safety activities (including marketing and communications strategies and messaging) and the priorities for transport policing and enforcement to improve passenger perceptions and confidence.
- 7.4 Our research shows that the most common barriers to public transport use were overcrowded services, slow journey times and unreliable services. These factors were greater barriers than any safety or security concerns. See Table 1 below. This is a real change from 2005/06 when fear of crime and anti-social behaviour was one of the primary reasons for not using public transport. The most common safety and security related barrier cited is concern about the anti-social behaviour of others, although levels of concern about anti-social behaviour are falling, from 35 per cent of people surveyed in 2013 to 30 per cent in 2016. Londoners also mentioned fear of being a victim of crime when travelling to/from, waiting for, and on board public transport as barriers, but the proportion of Londoners put off by each of these factors has declined over time. One in seven Londoners (15 per cent) were deterred by fear of terrorist attack in 2016, up from 12 per cent in previous years.

³ A capable guardian is anything, either a person or thing that discourages crime from taking place. These can be formal or informal such as staff, police officers, CCTV etc.

Table 1: Barriers to public transport use

	%	2013	2014	2015	2016
Overcrowded services		56	59	59	59
Slow journey times		38	41	41	42
Unreliable services		36	37	39	40
Cost of tickets		48	45	42	38
Concern about anti-social behaviour of others		35	34	32	30
Dirty environment on the bus/ train		26	28	25	26
Fear of crime getting to / from and waiting for the bus/ train		27	24	22	21
Fear of crime on the bus/ train		25	23	21	19
Fear about knife crime		24	20	19	18
Dirty environment getting to the bus/ train		17	18	18	18
Fear of terrorist attack		12	12	12	15
Risk of accidents		9	9	9	10
Lack of information about how to use public transport		10	10	9	10
Graffiti		9	10	8	8

- 7.5 TfL's survey distinguishes between more generalised anxiety while travelling and specific episodes of concern which provides more actionable results for TfL and the police. In 2016, 11 per cent of Londoners were quite or very worried about their personal security when using public transport in the Capital. Eighteen per cent of Londoners recalled an incident on public transport in the last three months that made them feel worried about their personal safety. While levels of general worry have marginally declined over the last four years (down from 13 per cent in 2013 to 11 per cent in 2016), the proportion of Londoners experiencing worrying incidents has remained largely constant (18 per cent in 2016, the same level as in 2013). The most common form of worrying incident that Londoners experienced when using the public transport network in 2016 was the threatening behaviour of other passengers. This was experienced by 31 per cent of those that felt worried, which equates to five per cent of Londoners as a whole. Drunken passengers and large groups of schoolchildren or youths are also common causes of worry incidents.
- 7.6 The research shows that when Londoners experience a worrying incident, it generally has little impact on their use of public transport: 55 per cent in 2016 said that the incident they experienced did not put them off using public transport at all, and a further 34 per cent were put off but continued to travel. The threat of a terror attack was the cause of worry for eight per cent of Londoners (equating to one per cent of Londoners as a whole). This cause of worry has risen steadily since 2014.
- 7.7 The survey also indicates that well-lit stations and stops, CCTV cameras and the presence of police and uniformed transport staff can all help to reassure people travelling. This is in line with findings from other TfL surveys and research studies in other areas of the UK.
- 7.8 In order to improve the survey methodology and sampling and to reduce the costs, TfL has now moved to an online survey. TfL has used this opportunity to

enhance the survey and make the results more actionable. The new survey should provide greater insight into how perceptions of safety and security and worrying incidents affect travel choices. The results from the first quarter of this new survey will be available later this year but more research is needed to understand the results and to track changes over time. The key measures from this survey will be reported to Panel.

- 7.9 Efforts to improve the safety and security of travelling or working on TfL's public transport networks are not limited to reducing actual levels of crime. TfL wants its customers and staff on the network to not only be safe but to feel safe. Reducing the fear of crime and improving confidence to travel is a priority for TfL and its policing partners. Initiatives such Operation Safer Travel for All and #westandtogether – which form part of TfL and the police activities to tackle hate crime on the network – are also focused on reassuring those groups that feel vulnerable to victimisation.

8 Summary and Next Steps

- 8.1 TfL is proactively working with the police to tackle those modes and offence types that are have seen an increase and are impacting on overall crime levels for TfL's public transport networks. The increasing rate of crime on London Underground is of particular concern and a range of measures have been implemented to deal with this.
- 8.2 The BTP has stepped up its high visibility policing operations on London Underground. BTP's Operation Enzyme, for example, is an operation targeting low-level violence, public order and antisocial behaviour. It involves joint working with TfL's revenue inspectors and the RTPC which is responsible for policing London's buses.
- 8.3 TfL and the BTP are also assessing the impact of BTP's changes to its crime investigation and demand deployment model on TfL's rail networks and whether further changes are needed in response to the increases in both the volume and rate of crime on London Underground and TfL's rail networks. As part of the early changes resulting from this ongoing review the BTP is allocating 80 officers from the current TfL funded cohort of officers to provide local policing teams and enhance levels of visible policing in key areas of the network.

List of Appendices to this report:

None

List of background papers:

None

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