



Managing Directors report

February 2022

1. State of the organisation:

How has Fare City performed in the last quarter? (Nov 2021 – Jan 2022)

1.1) Summary:

1.11) Unpaid work (including published work)

- In the last quarter we have published x1 article and x1 podcast.

- The article 'Unbarring the Way: Challenging the barriers to active travel is our second Young Professionals Programme (YPP) piece. We are currently in talks with x2 other contributors.

- We published our interview with the President of the European Cyclists Federation, who we spoke to at COP.

1.12) Paid work (including grant applications and pre-contract project work)

- In the last quarter we have: *(letters below correspond to the letters underneath – e.g. a/a)*

- a) Submitted and won x1 grant application from a third sector funder
- b) Been commissioned to deliver grant funded research on behalf of a new third sector client
- c) Been invited to tender for a consultancy project from a new for-profit client
- d) Been invited to tender for a consultancy project from a London BID
- e) Been approached to deliver a consultancy piece for a repeat third sector client
- f) Had x1 grant application rejected from a potential third sector funder

a) We have begun work on the Cleaner Air Market (CAM) at Maltby Street with x 5 project partners. To date, we have announced the project; held a partner roundtable; are in the process of confirming partner briefs and budget; are due to begin trader trials next month. The CAM will be held in June '22.

b) We have begun work to deliver a project on secure cycle parking in London ahead of the May local elections. We have been commissioned by a new third sector client. To date, we have agreed terms (brief, programme, contract); reviewed all quantitative data, are reviewing qualitative data and are setting up stakeholder meetings. The project is due w/c 1st April '22

c) We tendered on an outline brief issued to us by a new for-profit client having had meetings with them since April '21. The project is to analyse data from x50 city-specific schools based on their existing data which captured travel patterns of students. The project is currently on hold.

d) We were approached by a contact at a London BID who presented a project which the BID required evaluation for, we proceeded to present an overview of our services and initial project ideas to the BID manager who suggested that he would be interested in commissioning us to deliver the project. The project is currently on hold.

e) We have been approached by a repeat third sector client, to undertake a small piece of consultancy work (graphically updating a report). This is based on previous work we have done for them. We have submitted our costs and are awaiting agreement.

f) We submitted a grant fund proposal to a potential third sector funder for our project proposal 'Cityshot: Markets as catalysts for urban regeneration'. We were unsuccessful owing to the panel's view that the project did not fit the grant criteria. The directors will likely add the project to our research programme and look to secure alternative funding.

1.13) Internal work (including governance & strategy initiatives/documents)

- In the last quarter we have made progress on x4 strategic initiatives:

a) Core funding strategy:

The development of the Patrons Programme is based on a survey of potential patrons that we recently conducted. We have collated feedback and will present findings/recommendations at the February AB meeting with a view to launching the programme in April '22

b) Communications strategy:

We are working with a postgraduate student who is currently completing a University Digital Marketing course. The student will help the FC team develop a comprehensive comms strategy. The course leader will oversee the dissertation project while providing FC with additional advice on a periodic basis. This is due to begin in March '22.

c) Data protection and privacy policies:

We are currently finalising policies for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), privacy, cookies and media consent. Given the nature of our upcoming project work, these will need to be signed off in the next two to three weeks.

d) Research Programme:

We are currently working on a research programme which the directors will present to the organisation at the April AGM.

1.14) MD's comments:

- Since the November Advisory Board (AB) meeting, we have successfully managed to secure two pieces of paid work, both from grant funding bodies, and are potentially able to secure up to three consultancy pieces in the next quarter.
- The two live projects which the team are working on have the potential to be both innovative and impactful yet will necessitate that we quickly develop our existing skill sets to be able to deliver them on time, on budget and to the required standard. The CAM will entail extensive stakeholder management and negotiation given the number of partners, traders and community stakeholders involved. The cycle parking project will require diligent project management given the tight programme and a degree of political and professional awareness owing to the sensitivities of local elections and FC's status as an independent community interest company.

- It would be useful to follow up with advisory board members after the AB meeting to discuss aspects of the two respective projects.
- While delivering remunerated work remains a priority, the organisation must be receptive to identifying and securing further pieces of paid work. Several projects have the potential to move from tender stage to mobilisation stage in the next quarter and must be factored into the team's work programme. Several other projects (both new and existing) are at feasibility stage and the team should also aim to progress these in the next quarter.
- At present, the team do not have the capacity to begin another (large) piece of work until April '22 and have informed potential clients where appropriate.
- At the last AB meeting, the team discussed the need to continue producing published work (e.g. articles, podcasts, videos) as a means of providing thought leadership and stakeholder engagement. This has unfortunately (though inevitably) been put on hold in the last quarter, owing to paid (and potentially paid) work coming online which has reduced the team's capacity. However, the way the team has structured live projects will provide opportunities to share findings on a periodic basis which will ultimately serve the same purpose.
- Aside from project work, the team have made good progress on both the core funding and communications strategy which, in themselves, represent good stakeholder engagement.
- We will shortly be in a position to launch the FC Patrons Programme (April '22) and to begin working with a postgraduate student to develop a comprehensive communications strategy. Both initiatives are important and aim to address areas which the organisation is underdelivering in.
- Initial feedback from potential patrons suggests that there is a good opportunity to raise revenue via a subscription service. Considering the survey feedback and following on from the last AB meeting, the directors have taken the view that the Patrons Programme (not the partner programme) should be launched in a simplified form which endeavours to offer a single tier of subscription. This is designed to make the offering as equitable as possible, reduce the need to deliver different benefits for different tiers (i.e. minimise our work), and test the scheme with a view to scaling up as and when demand increases.
- Engaging a digital media postgraduate to help the organisation shape and implement a social media strategy will take time yet has the benefit of enabling us to understand how we can improve and (depending on the success of the project) may lead to us employing the student on a one-day a week basis – as and when we are able to do so.
- The directors have met to discuss our respective roles and how to best structure our workloads moving forward, following the decision of one of the directors to take some time away from FC over Christmas and new year. The directors agreed that despite initiating new director workstreams and benchmarks, more care was needed to recognise the demands on individual directors, along with the need to improve internal communication to enable directors to share concerns as and when they arise.

**The progress of individual projects has been detailed in the 'Paid project tracker_V04' document*

**The company's finances have been detailed in the FC 'Financial report' document*

1.2) Fare City's performance to primary objectives:

**The organisations primary objectives are set out in the FC Advisory Board Charter document, previously issued to all board members.*

- 1.21) *Objective 1: To deliver a high-quality service to our clients and stakeholders*
Indicator: Obtain peer and stakeholder recognition (e.g. awards, external publication, speaking invitations, collaborations and partnerships)

Has the objective been met?

1. Securing two paid pieces of work from two separate grant funding bodies demonstrates that we are beginning to become recognised in the industry and entrusted to deliver projects which advance both our own aims and the charitable objectives of reputable organisations.
2. Securing partnerships to deliver the CAM with five established organisations (to be formalised via an MoU) demonstrates that organisations are keen to partner with us to advance a shared vision and common goals.
3. We received x9 survey responses from a trusted cohort of FC stakeholders who told us that we were doing valuable work which the majority would financially support.
4. We are in the process of securing work with a repeat client based on the strength of our rapport and quality of our previous work with them.
5. We worked closely with a young professional to help them deliver a piece for the YPP programme. We held a debrief session with the mentee who reported that Fare City had provided excellent support throughout and confirmed they would recommend the programme to others.

How could Fare City improve?

1. Implement better post project evaluation:
 - This point has been retained from the last quarters MD report as it remains an area where we need to improve. While in this quarter we have implemented better post project evaluation (e.g YPP debrief session) we have been slow to then agree and implement further actions. While we have done so in the case of the Patrons Programme, we have yet to follow up with the cohort. While this is becoming increasingly difficult given the time constraints of paid project work, the directors must set time aside to do so.
2. Proactively engage with the wider industry:
 - There are many opportunities which we could take to further our contact base and grow our reputation – e.g. submit an article in an industry journal on the CAM. However, there is a hesitancy to do so owing (primarily) to a lack of resource. The directors could speak to the AB about how best to overcome this.

1.22) *Objective 2: To empower our stakeholders to consider making more informed travel choices*

Indicator: Provide evidence of greater stakeholder awareness/behaviour change via the use of social impact tools signed off by the client/stakeholder.

Has the objective been met?

1. FC's work at Maltby Street market has afforded us opportunities to engage with Stakeholders both directly and indirectly involved in the project. This has necessitated that we carefully consider and trial different ways of engaging with different groups – e.g. in person vs online / informal conversations vs surveys – to understand how best to work with them. To date, results have been positive and enabled us to setup up future actions, however, the development of social impact measurement tools is an important next step to help us gauge to what extent these actions have been successful.

How could Fare City improve?

1. Develop multiple ways of measuring and quantifying the impact of our work
 - This follows on from the recommendations of the previous MD report (1.22,1). However, given that the CAM and cycle parking project have now begun, we have outlined how we intend to do this and will need to implement these actions as per the respective briefs and programmes.

1.23) *Objective 3: To run the organisation in a sustainable manner*

Indicator: 'Secure fee-paying consultancy/grant funded work from reputable organisations which enable the organisation to thrive, while exploring the potential for core funding'

Has the objective been met?

1. We have met the above indicator in both respects; securing two paid projects from reputable organisations, while we have further developed the potential for core funding via direct stakeholder engagement. The last MD report stated that 'FC would have to carefully monitor the current approach' [1.23.1] This has been done and has helped us to secure project work.
2. Owing to both our short-term workload and one director's decision to temporarily step away from Fare City over Christmas, we will have to review and potentially reset the director workstreams and 90-day director benchmarks to acknowledge updated roles and responsibilities moving into the next quarter.
3. As we approach one year incorporated (12th March '22), we need to review any statutory obligations we have – e.g updated CIC statement and action them accordingly.

How could Fare City improve?

1. Implement key strategies to programme:

This point has been retained from the last quarters MD report as it remains an area where we need to improve. We had originally planned to finalise strategies by the mid-point of last quarter (end Dec/start Jan '22) with a view to implementation in the new year. This has slipped owing to both project work coming online and a short-term reduction in capacity. Where possible, directors must agree and aim to adhere to new targets.

2. State of the sector:

What external developments could impact the organisation?

Summary:

- Several UK-level initiatives have been launched this last quarter including the updated Highway Code, Active Travel England (ATE) and the governments 'Levelling Up' white paper.
- The Highway Code is acknowledged to provide greater legal protection for vulnerable road users and, like some European countries, is based on a model of strict liability, however, the success of its implementation remains to be seen owing to poor awareness/advertising campaign and vocal resistance among many elements of the mainstream media.
- Chris Boardman has departed as Manchester's Transport Commissioner to head up ATE. ATE will manage the national active travel budget, awarding funding for projects which meet the new national standards set out in 2020 and require funds to be returned for projects which have not been completed as contracted. The aim is for ATE to have statutory powers which many consider will ensure that local authorities implement schemes as agreed.
- The Levelling Up white paper sets out a manifesto for how government funding and resources will be distributed across the UK. The white paper pledges 12 medium-term missions which outlines government policy and associated outcomes to be achieved by 2030. The paper makes clear the role of transport and infrastructure for acting as a catalyst for change stating that by 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be 'significantly closer to the standards of London'. However, though acknowledged in the sector as a welcome development it does not propose any additional funding other than what has previously been agreed.
- Preparations for the UK-wide May '22 local elections are underway with campaigning due to start in March. Many consider that success will serve as affirmation or rejection of a candidate's transport policies, especially with regard to cycle provision, and LTN's.
- Clean air is once again on the agenda, with Manchester's Clean Air Zone (CAZ) becoming heavily politicised – likely to the detriment of the initiative. Following the roll out of the ULEZ expansion in London last year, CAZ's have been proposed across the UK but have been difficult to implement leading to phased adoption making their intended benefits difficult to quantify. In London, the recent Clean Air Summit which included the mayor and Chief Medical Officer, followed the publication of a city hall commissioned report 'Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030'. The report reiterated the need for road user charging and recommended a £2 daily levy to serve as an introduction to a larger programme at a later date.
- TfL have yet to reach a long-term funding agreement with the government, which has (partially) resulted in the steepest fares increase for a decade. Bus service fares will rise disproportionately and arguably hit the most deprived Londoners.

- Cargo bike sharing schemes are gaining popularity in Manchester and another scheme has been launched in London.

Opportunities for Fare City:

- The three UK-wide initiatives should make it easier for FC to make the case for promoting sustainable transport across the UK, though at present this will comprise drip-down as opposed to direct benefits. There may be scope to approach ATE at a later date regarding research or consultancy opportunities.
- FC have been a direct beneficiary of May's local elections, having been commissioned to deliver a piece around secure cycle parking with the aim of enabling our client to raise the issue with London councils.
- The growing interest in clean air initiatives fits well with the CAM (which will be held the week of UK clean air day) and should enable us to leverage more mainstream support for the initiative. Securing cross-party support for London-based politicians – e.g. city hall, assembly members and councillors – should be prioritised in the run up to the event.
- Cargo bike sharing schemes are slowly emerging in the biggest UK cities, including in London where FC are well positioned to partner with a supplier if funding can be found. We are also in touch with an Assembly Member who has posed questions on shared schemes directly to the mayor via mayor's questions and who could be a useful contact in securing cross-party support for such schemes.

Challenges for Fare City:

- In contrast to last quarters MD report, which identified FC's biggest challenge as securing paid work, we must now ensure that we can satisfactorily service the projects we have on, whilst identifying the most appropriate opportunities for the organisation moving forward.
- Cargo bike work remains a priority area, owing to our expertise and industry relations, however, we must remain open to exploring new avenues for research which we will set out in our research programme in the next quarter.
- As we approach one year incorporated, we must ensure that we continue to operate in the interests of our stakeholders and adhere to our responsibilities as a CIC, this includes being transparent, impartial and mitigating any conflicts of interest.