
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11 April 2017 at 169 Union Street, London SE1 0LL

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Present

Members

Jackie Ballard, Alan Benson, Richard Dilks, Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke (Chair), Abdi Osman, John Stewart

Members of the public

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer

1 **Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**

The Chair welcomed members and visitors to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

2 **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in addition to those standing declarations recorded on the London TravelWatch website.

4 Chair's activities and Transport Focus update

The Chair said that he had attended one Transport Focus board meeting since the last London TravelWatch meeting and noted that the Chief Executive had also attended as an observer. There had been several presentations at the meeting, including one from Mark Hopwood, Managing Director of Great Western Railway, with the focus on the high number and serious backlog of GWR complaints, due in part to problems with outsourcing. The Chief Executive said that many of the complaints relating to GWR could have been alleviated if the company had improved its communications with passengers about the problems they were experiencing. The Chair noted that in other regulated sectors, a company experiencing such problems may have faced a significant fine.

The Transport Focus board had also received a presentation from Dan Moore, Deputy Director of Rail Markets Strategy at the Department for Transport. The Chair had questioned Mr Moore on whether London issues were given enough attention at the DfT and a follow-up meeting on this was planned.

The Transport Focus board also heard from Dick Fearn, who was independent chair of the Western Route Supervisory Board run by Network Rail. The Chief Executive noted that London was divided into six regions by Network Rail, of which the Western Route was one, which made it more difficult to maintain a strategic view of the rail network in London as a whole. The Network Rail Anglia Route Board (which included Crossrail and all London Overground routes) had the greatest impact on London but the person heading this up had not been aware of the existence, let alone remit, of London TravelWatch until a recent introductory meeting.

The Chair said that he had given evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee in his capacity as Chair of London TravelWatch and had included an update on the redress scheme for rail passengers and information on London TravelWatch's most recent performance report.

The Chair had also given evidence to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee on rail safety. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that remit of the investigation had initially appeared to focus on infrastructure issues such as safety at level crossings but the questions at the committee had looked at policing and perceptions of safety. The Chair had followed up his oral evidence, which included a prominent reference to the problems with gaps between trains and platforms, with a written submission that covered other issues of safety in London TravelWatch's remit.

5 Minutes of the Board meeting held on 31 January 2017

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 31 January 2017 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the Chief Executive's job title on page 2.

6 Matters arising (LTW546)

In relation to the issue of step-free access at Bank underground station, it was agreed that this would be raised at the quarterly update meetings that London TravelWatch held with Mark Wild, the Managing Director of London Underground. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said he had also reiterated London TravelWatch's concerns at a meeting with the project sponsor. He said that TfL had begun working on a feasibility study but had not yet identified funding. This was an area that London TravelWatch would need to continue to press.

It was noted that the turn-over of staff at London Underground and the absence of an individual within London Underground to take responsibility may have contributed to the confusion over the inclusion of lifts to the Central line platforms. Although London TravelWatch would not usually involve itself with questions of accessibility at individual stations, the Board agreed that the strategic importance of Bank station as an interchange meant it warranted London TravelWatch's continued attention.

7 Key activities (LTW547)

The Chief Executive said that officers had attended several meetings in relation to the development of a new redress scheme for rail passengers. However, the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), representing train operating companies, had now decided to pursue a different model, in which London TravelWatch and Transport Focus would no longer take an executive role. The RDG was aiming to establish its own "Ombudsman" scheme that would allow passengers to go straight to appeal following investigation by the train operators, without having to go first to either London TravelWatch or Transport Focus. This was a significant change and London TravelWatch was reviewing the outcomes for passengers of the new model. The Chief Executive said she would be writing to the Transport Committee of the London Assembly to brief them on the new situation.

Action: Chief Executive

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had met Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and expressed concern about its continuing poor performance. He said that GTR was pursuing matters that had been raised by Chris Gibb in his review and that he would be meeting GTR again shortly to discuss the results of their recent timetable consultation.

The Chief Executive said that the roundtable discussion with Chris Grayling MP, the Minister of State for Transport, had involved other passenger and user groups, not industry bodies.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that the Nine Elms meeting had focused on improvements to the road between Battersea and the new Covent Garden site at Vauxhall, not Vauxhall bus station, the plans for which now appeared to be acceptable.

The Chief Executive said that the meeting with Southeastern had been constructive and the operator had been complimentary about the work of the casework team. She said that she was hoping to be able to arrange meetings with London Assembly members representing areas affected by the Southeastern franchise as the new franchise was due soon.

The meeting with TfL about buses had focused on marketing and ways of increasing passenger numbers. The Policy Officer (VS) said he had highlighted the work of private bus companies outside London but noted that the most important factor was to improve reliability and journey time.

The Director, Policy and Investigation noted that Network Rail had appointed a new director for the Anglia route, which was important to London TravelWatch as it included Crossrail. It would be important to liaise closely with Network Rail on their plans for this route and he was anxious that the relationship should be productive. The Chair said he would be happy to write to Network Rail if the relationship did not appear to be progressing well. He said that it would not be unreasonable for London TravelWatch to recover the cost of maintaining detailed passenger input to Network Rail if it was necessary in future. It was agreed that London TravelWatch should invite Richard Schofield, the Anglia Route Director, to a future meeting.

Action: Executive Assistant

8 What do passengers want from London's smaller stations? (LTW548)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented a draft report on smaller stations in the London railway area, focussing on the aspirations from a passenger perspective. He said that London TravelWatch had written the report as it was concerned that smaller stations were not given enough priority by industry planners. The report looked at the number of passengers using smaller stations and some background on how smaller stations had worked in the past, as well as reviewing other previous research to identify elements that were relevant to smaller stations. The report concluded with a snapshot of what made a good smaller station.

The wording of the report was largely finalised but the intention was to add photos and illustrations to maximise the impact of the document. It was noted that a catchier title would also help promote the findings.

It was noted that the wording could be tightened up somewhat to focus more clearly on the definition of best practice. Before and after examples would be useful if available. A single-page checklist of what made a good smaller station would be handy for local campaigners to use.

It was noted that accessibility issues featured in the body of the report but not in the recommendations on page 5 and this should be addressed. It was also noted

that the figures for passenger usage of small stations were potentially inaccurate and that the report should be clear about the limitations of these numbers. It may also be useful to include an explanation about why one million passenger exits and entrances was chosen as the cut-off for a smaller station.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would confirm with Transport Focus that the report fairly reflected recent changes to the National Rail Passenger Survey and acknowledged that statistical coverage of all small stations through NRPS was not feasible.

It was noted that the report included a comment that Permit to Travel machines should be phased out but that later on it stated that they could be required at smaller stations; this should be clarified. Members were invited to send any written comments to the Director, Policy and Investigation, by Friday 20 April and the full report would be revised and recirculated in due course.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

9 Transport for London performance report (LTW549)

The Policy Officer (VS) presented the report on the performance of Transport for London over the period October to December 2016. He said that the report was based on performance data provided by TfL and analysed by London TravelWatch.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that the section on London Streets measured reliability of travelling on TfL's road network, primarily affecting private motorists, taxi users and bus passengers. The report showed that vehicle speeds were declining in the central London area and that bus speeds were declining generally. It was noted that a high number of bus services were now below the contracted standard and this should be highlighted through media work.

Action: Communications Officer

The report showed problems with performance on the Piccadilly line over the period. This had been caused by the metal train wheel tyres slipping on leaves and flattening out of shape as a result of the application of the breaks. It was noted that TfL had disposed of one of the lathes that would 'round' the wheels back into the correct shape. This should be made clearer in the executive summary to the report. In addition, an explanatory comment should be included alongside the graph.

The section on the Docklands Light Railway should be amended to specify the performance target.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that Overground rail services performed better than most train operators in the south east area but there had been a dip in performance in the period, possibly caused by the knock-on effect of problems related to London Bridge station.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that Dial a Ride would be moving to reporting performance twice a year, rather than quarterly as now.

Members noted that there had been an increase in the number of complaints about bus services but the satisfaction score for buses was improving. It was noted that the satisfaction score was only measured by people using the service and did not include views of people who were so dissatisfied that they stopped using buses.

In relation to pavement obstructions, the Policy Officer (VS) said that some major retailers' use of A-boards had caused concern and he was hopeful that one of these retailers, Sainsbury's, would agree to remove its pavement obstructions.

10 Any other business

There was no other business.

11 Resolution to move into confidential session

It was resolved, under section 15(2)(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the item(s) to be discussed, it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded for a section of the meeting.

During the confidential session, members considered a report on cycling in London and the confidential minutes, and reviewed the meeting.