
Minutes

Agenda item: 5
Drafted 24.06.15

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12 May 2015 at 169 Union Street, London SE1 0LL

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Present

Members

Chris Brown (from Item 5), Richard Dilks, Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke (Chair), Abdikafi Rage, John Stewart, Ruth Thompson

Guests

Howard Smith	Operations Director, Crossrail Ltd (Item 7)
Helen Cansick	Transport for London (Item 8)
Mike Keegan	Transport for London (Item 8)

Matt Winfield	Transport for London
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Members of the public

Secretariat

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

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

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

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for lateness were received from Chris Brown.

3 Declarations of interest

In addition to the standing declarations of interest, Richard Dilks declared that he had met Transport for London to discuss congestion in his professional capacity at London First. The board agreed that this did not present a conflict with his role at London TravelWatch and that he should be free to participate fully in the discussion of item 9.

4 Chair's activities and Transport Focus update

The Chair said that he had been abroad for a considerable period since the last Board meeting but that there had been limited activity to report.

The main item during his absence had been a Transport Focus informal board discussion on 16 April, on the outcome of initial work on highways, to which he had made observations via email. This would be a challenging area for the organisation as it represented a new way of considering transport, with outcomes being dependent on user as well as operator behaviour. This was in contrast to its traditional work on rail and buses where a service was being provided by an operator and there was usually a clear contractual relationship.

After his return, the Chair attended a Transport Focus meeting on 30 April in Manchester on complaint handling and related statistics. Other meetings he attended during the period were outlined in the Key Activities report.

The Chief Executive reported that Robert Nichols had been appointed as Safety Adviser for one day per week, continuing in his role as Policy Officer for the other four days.

She said that London TravelWatch had been calling for the remit of the Travel Demand Management board to be extended to include unplanned disruption and the group was working on new terms of reference.

The Chief Executive referred to an incident at Clapham Junction station that had led to passengers being stranded aboard a train for several hours and assured members that she had been in contact with the Department for Transport immediately to ask why it took so long to disembark the passengers.

In relation to the London Underground ticket office closures, the Policy Officer said he had met London Underground and put members' concerns forward. He said that London Underground had invited London TravelWatch to attend one of its mystery shopper surveys and that London Underground had committed to review the locations of Visitor Information Centres. In addition, London TravelWatch was invited to view the training for the reallocated staff. These offers were welcomed.

Members asked whether the mystery shopping feedback was actioned. The Policy Officer said that stations were visited several times, at a rate of more than one a week, and that the visits were very thorough. London Underground's internal

reports highlighted stations that missed targets, which currently were mainly on the outer loop of the Central line, and the focus was on bringing them up to standard.

Members asked if London TravelWatch had received any complaints about the ticket office closures. The Policy Officer said that no complaints had been received as yet, but only one-fifth of ticket offices had so far been closed.

The Chief Executive reported that the Policy Officer was attending as an observer a very frank review group looking at causes of recent poor performance on the Brighton main line. This was welcomed.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 March 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Governance committee minutes of 21 October 2014 were noted.

6 Matters arising (LTW497)

Members noted that they would be attending a site visit at Victoria station following the board meeting. They wanted to press ahead with other visits, potentially including examples of poor interchanges in outer London.

Action: Executive Assistant

In relation to the London Underground ticket office closures, the Policy Officer said that London TravelWatch was now in the monitoring phase rather than the reporting phase so he was not expecting to bring forward further reports on this in the short term.

Members agreed to return annually to “out of London” issues (ie those relating to the areas of benefit that lay outside the Greater London boundary) at board meetings if resources permitted.

7 Key activities (LTW498)

Members noted that London TravelWatch was the lead organisation on the joint research project related to transport affordability, working alongside London Councils and Trust for London. A research brief had been drawn up and partners were considering whether funding would be available. Ideally research would be commissioned in time to influence mayoral manifestos.

The Policy Officer said that the two meetings on 25 March were attended by him, not the Director, Policy and Investigation, as stated in the report.

Members noted that the triennial review of Transport Focus, conducted by the Department for Transport, included some recommendations about Transport Focus working more closely with London TravelWatch, eg on complaint handling and case work. The Chief Executive said that her understanding was that the reviewer had been unaware of the extensive work that had previously been carried out in this area and that the recommendations were largely speculative. It was agreed that the Chair

would write to Jeff Halliwell, Chair of Transport Focus, with copies to the DfT and London Assembly, to set out the background and current position.

Action: Executive Assistant

The Chief Executive said that the Travel Demand Management board meeting taking place later that day would include a brief discussion on broadening its scope to include unplanned disruption. She would report back on the outcome of the discussion.

The Chief Executive confirmed that London TravelWatch had responded to TfL's consultation in its approach to transparency and had commented that the new website design made it more difficult to make complaints. Matt Winfield of TfL said that the website would be relaunched in the following month.

The Chief Executive said that Gatwick Airport was very keen to meet London TravelWatch to discuss surface transport access to the airport.

8 Crossrail

The Chair welcomed Howard Smith, Operations Director at Crossrail, to the meeting. Mr Smith was formerly a TfL employee under Mike Brown, with responsibility for trams. At Crossrail his role was to take over responsibility for Crossrail from the engineers, at the appropriate time, and make it an operational railway.

Mr Smith gave a presentation covering various aspects relating to Crossrail. He said that TfL aimed for Crossrail to be fully integrated into the TfL network and the best metro railway in Europe. Crossrail cost £15 billion and when completed would cover 118 km. About 10,000 people were working on its construction and it would run from Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east to Reading in the west with a branch line to Heathrow.

Mr Smith said that the tunnelling was now nearly complete with one continuous tunnel running from Royal Oak to Pudding Mill Lane and work was underway on station fit outs. There was a high turnover of staff as some elements of work were completed and new skills were needed.

At the end of May TfL would take responsibility for stopping services between Shenfield and Liverpool Street, with these services operating under the 'TfL Rail' brand. It was too early to label it as Crossrail at that point as most of the benefits of Crossrail would not yet be available. Abellio Greater Anglia would retain the fast services on this line, and responsibility for Shenfield station. Liverpool Street station would retain its current status but would have MTR (TfL Rail) and London Overground staff representatives. On maps, the line would be blue during the interim phase and purple in due course.

Stations on the TfL Rail route would be staffed from first to last service, which would be a huge change at stations such as Maryland. This allowed passengers with mobility impairments to have a turn-up-and-go service as the lifts would no longer need to be switched off after staff left. In addition, funding was available for all Crossrail stations to be accessible from street to platform. Ticket offices on the TfL Rail route would remain but TfL would continue to look at the best way of selling tickets to passengers.

Mr Smith said there would be an extra 30 British Transport Police officers on the route, with eight being new and the remainder being redeployed from other parts of the network where crime had declined. He hoped to be able to reduce ticketless travel to around 2%, which would bring it into line with Overground services. He intended to introduce ticket gates at almost all stations, although it would be difficult in some cases such as at Hanwell, which was listed.

Mr Smith said that funding was available to refurbish Crossrail stations in a similar fashion to the upgrades on London Overground routes, with a focus on increasing accessibility. There would also be cosmetic upgrades of rolling stock, with scrolling passenger information in carriages and modifications to door systems.

The TfL Rail route would be integrated within the TfL network. An announcement on integration with TfL fares would be made this week and the TfL Rail route would be added to the TfL Journey Planner website. In addition, the TfL "rainbow boards" would be introduced at stations and TfL would take on the customer contact role.

The operator on the TfL Rail route would be MTR, whose Managing Director, Steve Murphy, formerly worked for London Overground. Their contract was based on payment for performance with no revenue risk. The contract incentivised MTR to recover from disruption even when the incident was caused by another party and was not within MTR's control. This was a new approach to train operator contracts and was leading to strengthened relationships between MTR and Network Rail.

Mr Smith said he hoped to take delivery of new Crossrail trains in May 2017, at which point the Crossrail brand would be launched. The fleet would comprise 65 trains, with the main depot at Old Oak Common.

Members asked whether bikes would be accommodated on the new trains. Mr Smith said that he expected there to be space on the trains but that they would need to be brought into and out of very deep stations in central London, which would be challenging. There would be restrictions on bike carriage in peak hours in peak directions.

Mr Smith said that in order to ensure the smoothest possible introduction of the new services the adoption of new routes was being phased, with the final phase due for completion in December 2019.

Members asked whether London Overground's compensation arrangements would apply on the Crossrail route. Mr Smith confirmed that they would.

Members asked whether the stations along the western end of the route would also be refurbished as was planned for the eastern end stations. Mr Smith said that it was less relevant because there was more radical Crossrail work at the western end and so the need for simple refurbishment was less likely to arise. Stations not subject to radical works at the western end were generally less in need to upgrades.

Members questioned whether Crossrail would eventually serve Heathrow Terminal 5. Mr Smith said it was possible technically and operationally but it required political support.

Members asked Mr Smith what he viewed to be the most significant risk facing Crossrail. He said that the most difficult aspects related to boundaries and getting people to work together such as to link up signalling systems. In relation to reliability,

managing the core 24 trains per hour on tracks shared with commuter and freight trains would be challenging.

The Chair thanked Mr Smith for attending and for his clear and informative presentation.

9 Congestion on London streets

The Chair welcomed Helen Cansick and Mike Keegan of TfL to the meeting.

Ms Cansick said that TfL understood that economic growth in London led to increased congestion on the road network. The Roads Modernisation Programme would see significant investment in roads infrastructure over several years, much of which was designed to increase the capacity of the network and accommodate the growth in cycling.

She said that £1.8 bn would be invested in road assets, in order to ensure infrastructure such as flyovers would be fully maintained and would not need to be closed to make emergency repairs. There would also be highway improvements at locations such as Bow and Croydon Fiveways and an annual programme of smaller schemes.

On cycling, Ms Cansick said TfL was creating the cycle superhighways as well as improving some junction design to allow segregation and improve safety. In addition to TfL works there were many private building projects underway in London, with high demands for access to roads for providing utilities and services as well as handling construction traffic. As far as possible TfL aimed to co-ordinate these works so that roads could be restricted rather than closed altogether.

Ms Cansick said that TfL had introduced 'active traffic management', which involved the use and timing of traffic lights to squeeze capacity from the road network. This helped buses to keep moving, stopped junctions being blocked by stationary traffic and kept gyratories moving. TfL had identified 140 key locations for congestion and actively managed the flow of traffic towards trigger points.

Ms Cansick said that increasing enforcement of regulations such as yellow box junctions and bus lane restrictions improved traffic flows and camera enforcement was targeted on areas of predicted non-compliance.

Work on bus reliability was focused on the 24 routes most affected by cycle superhighway works, with priority given to routes that will be affected earliest in the programme.

For the first time, TfL was bringing travel demand management techniques to road users, with comprehensive campaigns giving specific information on construction works and variable signage boards also providing information for road users.

Ms Cansick said that the overriding driver of the roads modernisation programme was to reduce cyclist deaths. Schemes will permanently reallocated capacity from motor vehicles to cyclists and this change would need to be managed in the longer term.

Mike Keegan said TfL predicted there would be a 60% increase in people travelling into central London in the morning peak by 2030. His role at TfL was to consider the longer term options for increasing roads capacity.

The first option related to improved management of freight and deliveries. Mr Keegan said that TfL was looking at whether it was possible to reduce the amount of freight going into central London in the morning peak and whether more freight could be moved to out of hours. This happened during the Olympics and did not result in substantial increases in complaints from residents or businesses.

Increasing road space, for example by tunnelling, would relieve congestion but would be very expensive and may have a negative impact on local areas. An effective tool for managing demand was through payments such as tolls or area-based charges but this was politically sensitive. Mr Keegan said he was interested in London TravelWatch's views on these issues.

Members asked how TfL worked with boroughs on congestion. Ms Cansick said that TfL was the traffic manager for London and controlled all traffic lights, including those on borough roads, so they liaised extensively with boroughs on this. Boroughs were very aware of the problems ahead and had different ways of engaging with TfL over their future aspirations. On the whole, borough aspirations were in line with TfL's but occasionally they differed and this could be challenging.

Mr Keegan said that the Roads Task Force was set up to consider the network as a whole and try to manage conflicting demands. A framework of nine different road types had been established and TfL was now working to classify the whole road network within these types.

Members noted that the options for managing congestion, night-time freight deliveries, cut and cover tunnels and roads pricing, were all likely to be unpopular with at least some of London's communities. It may help if TfL could be clearer about the options and the implications of not taking steps to alleviate congestion, otherwise the debate would not be properly aired. Mr Keegan said that all of the options had pros and cons and that none of them would be an answer on its own. They needed greater exploration to understand them better.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, asked whether TfL had origin and destination data for central London traffic as analysing this could help understand whether some of the key to understanding the options might lie at the destination end of the journey. Mr Keegan said that the problem was not an increase in levels of traffic but a reduction in road space following reallocation of roads to cyclists. Ms Cansick said that some modelling had been carried out on traffic on the A13 corridor and showed that only around 5% of vehicles through Barking travelled as far as the inner ring road, with the rest of the traffic diverting elsewhere.

The Policy Officer asked what the total reduction in road capacity would be under the modernisation plan. Ms Cansick said that following completion in December 2016 there would be a reduction of road capacity for motor vehicles of 25% within the inner ring road. She said there was also a small increase in traffic volumes alongside the capacity reduction but this was limited as roads reached saturation. Vehicle speeds were monitored as they were indicators of saturation.

Members asked whether TfL was also looking at behaviour change as a way of reducing cycling casualties. Ms Cansick said that the priority was providing better facilities for cyclists in areas such as Blackfriars Bridge, although enforcement teams had also targeted areas of known poor cyclist behaviour. Members noted that the introduction of better facilities for cyclists would encourage additional cycling, which would lead to a reduction in congestion.

Members asked whether TfL was increasing provision for bike parking, including in areas such as the Royal Parks. Ms Cansick said the parks were not under TfL's control but TfL was introducing more street cycle parking where possible. Mr Keegan said that there was also a role for businesses to provide bike parking, showers and similar facilities for their workforces.

In response to a question, Ms Cansick said that of London's 6,000 sets of traffic lights, 4,000 could be controlled centrally, with about 3,500 of them using Scoot sensors in road surfaces to control the lights. This was a very efficient system and TfL hoped to reach 5,000 sets of lights on Scoot by 2018. TfL was also looking at Scoot for pedestrians and cyclists.

Members suggested that enforcement against illegal parking, for example in bus lanes, was now more difficult than previously, which did not help with congestion. Ms Cansick said she agreed that enforcement was necessary as traffic needed to be able to flow freely.

The Chair thanked Ms Cansick and Mr Keegan for their contributions.

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 discussed issues facing transport users in London and reviewed the meeting.