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## Minutes

Agenda item: 5  
Drafted 28.07.14

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### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 15 July at Dexter House, Royal Mint Court

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#### Present

##### Members

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

##### Guests

Charles Horton                      Govia Thameslink Railway (Item 12)

Sarah Boundy                        Govia Thameslink Railway (Item 12)

Matt Winfield                        Transport for London

##### Members of the public

##### Secretariat

Tim Bellenger                        Director, Policy and Investigation

Janet Cooke                         Chief Executive

Richard Freeston-Clough        Communications Officer

Robert Nicholls                    Policy Officer

Sharon Malley                        Executive Assistant (minutes)

#### 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. John Stewart apologised that he would need to leave the meeting early in order to give evidence to Parliamentary select committee.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

Glyn Kyle notified members of a new standing interest as he had been appointed to Age UK East London and Chris Brown said he was working on a contract to promote the City of London sustainability awards. There were no other declarations of interest.

## **4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update**

The Chair said there had not been any Passenger Focus Board meetings since the last London TravelWatch Board meeting in June. However, there had been an informal Passenger Focus member meeting, which the Chair had been unable to attend, that had considered Passenger Focus's new responsibilities in relation to major highways.

The Chair had attended the Passenger Focus statistics governance group on survey questionnaires and methodology.

The Chair said that in his London TravelWatch role he had continued to meet stakeholders and London Assembly members and had completed the round of Board member appraisals.

It was noted that while the changes in Passenger Focus's remit to include major highways had generally few implications for London TravelWatch, it would be worth monitoring the position in respect of areas such as the Dartford river crossing and operation of the M25 as these could have knock-on repercussions for London road and public transport users.

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 3 June 2014 were agreed subject to a correction on the final paragraph of page 3, the penultimate line of which should read "had previously provided" rather than "had now provided".

## **6 Matters arising (LTW471)**

The Executive Assistant was still trying to finalise dates for a visit to the Network Rail control centre in Three Bridges. It may be possible to join the visit with the scheduled meeting of the Governance committee in October.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

The Chair said that the 2015-16 business plan and budget bid would need to be with the GLA by the end of September for consideration by the Transport Committee in mid-October. The individual Assembly member meetings that had

been held meant that there was no need for London TravelWatch to offer a seminar to Assembly members this year. It was noted that following the recent meeting with her, Joanne McCarthy AM used the findings in a London TravelWatch report to ask a question of the Mayor of London. It was also noted that James Cleverly AM was a strong supporter of devolution in London and recognised the need to work with MPs outside London TravelWatch's area to gain their deeper understanding of the issues in future.

The Policy Officer said he was talking to Transport for London (TfL) about putting more consumer-focused targets in the TfL performance report. He hoped to begin with overcrowding and journey times for buses and would then move on to London Underground. The Chair said he had met the Policy Officer to discuss this issue and the Policy Officer would now be taking it forward.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said he was drafting the response on surface transport access to airports and aimed to issue the final version in the next two weeks.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch's letter to Gareth Powell of London Underground on proposed changes to ticket offices should be put on London TravelWatch's website.

**Action: Communications Officer**

## **7 Key activities (LTW472)**

In response to a question about part-time season tickets, Matt Winfield of TfL said that TfL was currently investigating ways of allowing passengers who wanted to buy tickets for more than one day but less than a whole week could do so more cheaply than at present. It was noted that the contactless payment pilot on TfL services was progressing and a potential date for roll-out was in place, alongside capping for the bus network.

In relation to the meeting with London Overground, the Director, Policy and Investigation, said that stations directly controlled by London Overground would not be affected by London Underground's proposed changes to ticket offices. However, at least 11 stations served by London Overground services were run by London Underground and it may be necessary for a different process to be undertaken before ticket offices in those stations could be closed.

It was noted that London TravelWatch continued to press Southeastern on extending Oyster on its commuter services.

## **8 Consultation proposals in relation to London Underground ticket office changes**

The Policy Officer said that London TravelWatch was seeking to fill a gap in the consultation undertaken to date by asking passengers for their views about proposals to close ticket offices in London Underground stations. He was hoping to identify potential problems before the changes took place so they could be addressed before the changes were made rather than trying to retro-fit solutions

once the offices were closed. He said he wanted to ask passengers whether they predicted any difficulties with the loss of their ticket office.

The consultation would be open for a six-week period and would be accessed via London TravelWatch's website. London Underground had agreed to put posters in ticket offices so there should be reasonably good exposure. The Policy Officer thought it might be possible to target Oyster users, although this might skew the responses as Oyster users might be disproportionately less affected by losing ticket offices than users of paper tickets.

The Policy Officer said the questionnaire would include standard demographic questions as well as questions on which stations the passengers used, how they currently used ticket offices and ticket machines, what they thought of current staffing arrangements and how they felt the proposals could be improved.

The Chief Executive said that it was unlikely that the detailed TfL analysis of individual stations would be completed until after London TravelWatch's consultation. She said that TfL had offered support for analysing responses to the consultation although any person involved in such work would operate under London TravelWatch's direction and using its systems. It would be important to ensure there was no conflict of interest in analysing the responses.

A member asked whether TfL could include a link to London TravelWatch's consultation on the TfL journey planner website.

It was noted that it would be important to be clear and accurate about the proposals and that information was given on issues such as how queuing would work.

Members questioned whether enough information would be gathered on central London stations as the surveys would be focusing on people's home stations. It would also be important to clarify whether people would only be asked to comment on their own behalf or whether they could make responses on behalf of others in their household. Members also highlighted the need if possible to capture the views of casual users and tourists in the survey.

It was agreed that, after taking these comments on board, the Policy Officer would circulate initial thoughts on the survey to members for comment.

**Action: Policy Officer**

## **9 New proposals for Crossrail 2 (LTW473)**

The Policy Officer said that TfL was consulting on the next phase of proposals for Crossrail 2. There were three main questions: whether the service should run through Dalston Junction or Hackney Central; whether to include a station in Chelsea, and if so whether it should be at Kings Road or Chelsea West; and whether the route should be extended to New Southgate.

The Board felt that it would be difficult for London TravelWatch to 'take sides' on what were effectively zero sum issues where decisions had to be made between competing priorities. But they agreed with the Policy Officer's recommendation that London TravelWatch should seek to work with TfL in order to ensure that the passenger voice was heard throughout the decision-making process. It would be

important that London TravelWatch's priorities for passengers, such as accessibility and ease of interchange, be included in the discussions even if they did not form part of the cost-benefit analysis. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would respond to the consultation on this basis.

**Action: Policy Officer**

## **10 ORR consultation on ticket sales (LTW474)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) intended to carry out a review of train ticket retailing. There was an opportunity for London TravelWatch to influence the consultation at an early stage, to promote such passenger benefits as smart and electronic ticketing. London TravelWatch's experience of how passengers used smart ticketing in London provided a useful background for the ORR's consideration of this issue. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the complicated nature of the ticketing system meant that London TravelWatch would support simplification. He said it was important that the consultation focused on the practical rather than the theoretical nature of the ticketing market.

Members noted that London TravelWatch should define its own aspirations for Oyster and other users then set out how these might apply to the ORR's initiative. This could eventually lead to a Code of Practice on ticketing. Members noted that without external steering the ticketing market might not deliver products in the best interests of passengers.

Members also noted that there was a difference between long-distance services, where passengers might have a variety of transport modes to choose between and price becomes a factor in deciding which to use, and shorter, commuter services, where there may not be any options for any given journey and therefore pricing becomes less important.

It was noted that integration of Oyster into the ticketing system, and handling the ticketing landscape post-Oyster, would be very important, as would preservation of through-ticketing options.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would seek to influence the ORR's consultation in advance of its publication in Autumn.

**Action: Director, Policy and Investigation**

## **11 Update on value for money business plan objective (LTW475)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, gave a report on outcomes related to the London TravelWatch business plan objective relating to value for money for passengers. He said he was pleased to see that passenger satisfaction scores for value for money had been increasing in the London and south east area.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had analysed the routes with low passenger satisfaction scores and members of his team had visited stations on those routes to audit the facilities that were being provided and had found

inconsistent provision of seating, varying according to which train people travelled on.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said there was also a correlation between low passenger satisfaction and services that drop in frequency, from four trains per hour to one, in the evenings and at weekends. From the passenger perspective, these services were changing during the day from turn-up-and-go to needing planning in advance.

Members noted that London TravelWatch had long called for a minimum on all metro services of four trains per hour and that lower frequencies than that led to severe passenger detriment. It was also noted that small investments in stations could have a significant impact on satisfaction with value for money.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he hoped to be able to use this understanding of the dynamics of influencing passenger views of value for money in London TravelWatch's contributions to the consultations on the forthcoming direct franchise awards. Members said it was important to ensure that operators had incentives to improve and that they understood the needs of passengers. This was an area of work to keep under review and employ with operators where necessary.

## **12 Annual review and accounts (LTW477)**

Members thanked officers for their work in compiling the 2013-14 annual review and accounts. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would meet the Board member communications champion and the Communications Officer to discuss how to progress the design of the next annual review.

**Action: Communications Officer**

## **13 Thameslink Southern Great Northern franchise award (LTW477)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that London TravelWatch had been largely successful in getting its aspirations included as part of the franchise specification, for example in relation to the frequencies required on the Great Northern part of the network, agreements on replacing rolling stock, maintaining through services on the Wimbledon loop and staffing the busiest stations at all times when trains stop at them.

Charles Horton, Chief Executive Officer of Govia Thameslink Railway Ltd, and his colleague Sarah Boundy, gave a presentation on the plans for the new franchise. Mr Horton said that the franchise would be split into five service directorates with some existing brands being retained and some new ones being introduced. Govia Thameslink Railway would not be a passenger-facing brand. The elements of the new franchise would become live in phases, with the first beginning in September 2014 and the final phase beginning in summer 2015.

Mr Horton said that new, longer trains would be introduced during the course of the franchise as part of the drive to increase capacity. In addition, work would continue with Network Rail to try to improve reliability.

There would be a consultation in Autumn on changes to the services to the south coast. There was also a strong focus on working with partners through the disruption caused by the Thameslink programme.

Mr Horton said his company was aiming to launch an improvement to its app in autumn to give better real-time train running and loading information. He said the franchise's smart ticketing system would be rolled out across the franchise area and he was looking at smart season tickets for part-time workers and extending Oyster pay as you go beyond London.

Mr Horton said he hoped to be able to look beyond the station curtilage in order to accommodate door-to-door journeys. He also wanted to be able to focus on servicing international gateways.

The company intended to invest £50m across its 230 stations. There would be some significant environmental improvements alongside a programme of stakeholder and community engagement.

There would be changes to the arrangements for station staffing. In future, the busiest 101 stations by footfall would be staffed from the first to the last train, which would mean some quieter stations that currently had first-to-last staffing would lose it.

Mr Horton said that there were some exciting and creative obligations in the franchise programme but there were some elements that passengers may view as losses. He hoped that overall people would view the new franchise as improving their journeys, with more capacity, information and reliability.

In response to a question, Mr Horton said that he was hoping to be able to allow passengers to buy flexible season tickets that enabled them to travel on the days they needed to, not necessarily in groups of a week or a month, but there were no timings for launch of this as yet. The Chief Executive said it would be important for information on this to be clear as potentially confusing messages were being received by passengers already.

A member asked what Mr Horton viewed as the biggest challenge going forward. Mr Horton said that cultural integration of the different organisations would be difficult, as would delivering certain of the franchise obligations that might conflict with passenger expectation. He was also aware of the risks involved in the interface with the major Thameslink programme.

A member asked how the franchise's smart ticketing would integrate with Oyster. Mr Horton said it should be as interchangeable as possible as many people would need to use both the smart ticket and Oyster card.

Members stressed the importance of operating four trains per hour on metro routes so that passengers could turn up and go rather than needing to plan journeys in advance.

A member asked where the financial risks of the franchise lay. Mr Horton said that the cost risk sat with Govia Thameslink Railway and the revenue risk was with the Department for Transport (DfT). The DfT had negotiated a strong deal, with a contractual mechanism that strongly incentivised Govia Thameslink Railway to perform.

**14 Any other business**

Members recorded their thanks to Transport for London for allowing London TravelWatch to make use of their meeting room.

**15 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 their response to the London Underground vision for the tube and reviewed the meeting.