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## Minutes

Agenda item: 7  
Drafted 03.08.15

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**Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 21 July 2015 at 169 Union Street, London SE1 0LL**

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### Present

#### Members

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

#### Guests

Keith Bailey                      Transport Focus (Item 8)  
Peter Bradley                     Transport for London (Item 9)

#### 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/Safety Adviser (RN)  
Vincent Stops                      Policy Officer (VS)  
Chris Wise                         Policy Officer (CW)

## 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**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

In addition to the standing declarations of interest, Stephen Locke declared a conflict of interest for the item on the Transport Focus's NRPS consultation as he was also a member of the Transport Focus board and had been instrumental in designing the consultation. Ruth Thompson would therefore chair this item. He also had a minor interest in the item on small stations as this also made reference to the NRPS consultation but this was not significant enough to prevent his participation in this item.

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

The Chair said that he had attended a Transport Focus board meeting on 13 May in Cardiff, which focused on transport issues in Wales. He had also attended a London-based meeting in July which looked at issues including devolution and the various reviews affecting Network Rail. He said that Transport Focus had discussed the difficulty of devolution within Network Rail itself. One specific concern in relation to possible Network Rail restructuring was the conflict between the concept of London as a stand-alone region and as the terminating point for many individual routes. This made it difficult to separate London from other parts of the network. Transport Focus had noted that many of the shortcomings in recent rail performance were down to Network Rail so reforms were clearly on the agenda. Transport Focus had also considered on-going research on driver priorities under its new highways remit and had been working on its consultation on the National Rail Passenger Survey.

The Chair said that he had attended several informal meetings in his role as chair of Transport Focus's statistics governance group.

In his London TravelWatch role, he had attended meetings with stakeholders including James Brokenshire MP, Gavin Barwell MP, Val Shawcross AM and Caroline Pidgeon AM and work in this area continued. He said that the meetings with members of Parliament had been positive and that MPs of all parties with constituencies affected by metro rail routes were strongly supportive of London TravelWatch's position on devolution.

The Chair said London TravelWatch would need in the near future to formulate more detailed thinking on the practical aspects of devolution and how it should be taken forward. This should address the problems of accountability for services that crossed borders as well as identifying those services that were essentially metro in nature even though they included areas beyond the London boundary. There were also issues regarding services that operated within London but with only a few stops. This was likely to be a substantial piece of work for which there probably would not be space in the current business plan, but it would be essential to follow through the organisation's priority regarding reform of rail franchising in the capital.

The Chief Executive said that the programme of meetings with MPs focussed on those with constituencies covering relevant routes as well as taking advantage of ad hoc opportunities as they presented themselves.

The Chair added that he gave evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee on 9 June at its hearing on rail devolution. There had been a striking level of agreement during discussions and he hoped there would be aspects of the conclusions for London TravelWatch to pick up on following the report's publication.

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 May 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to adding the following sentence to the paragraph on page 2 relating to the Safety Adviser appointment: "The Safety Adviser post was employed by London TravelWatch and worked jointly for it and Transport Focus," and amending 'in need to upgrades' to 'in need of upgrades' on page 5.

The Governance committee minutes of 10 February 2015 were noted.

## **6 Matters arising (LTW499)**

Members welcomed the newly published Annual Review and were particularly pleased with the section on outcomes and impacts. The Chief Executive thanked Glyn Kyle for his assistance in formulating the design and presentation of the report. She said she expected to be able to send the Annual Review to stakeholders alongside the Interchange Matters report in around two weeks.

Members noted that the visit to Victoria station had been very useful, as had the visit to interchanges in West London. Visits provided a useful opportunity to exchange views and discuss issues with other members, which made the visits more valuable than if undertaken alone. Further visits would be arranged in due course.

It was noted that Robert Goodwill MP was a minister of state at the Department for Transport and not an officer, as stated in the report.

In relation to the closure of ticket offices at London Underground stations, the Director, Policy and Investigation, said he expected TfL would soon submit their Schedule 17 application to close the ticket offices at 11 stations on the former Silverlink route.

The Policy Officer (RN) said he had observed TfL's "mystery shopper" programme evaluating the impact of ticket office closures at Westminster station, which increased his understanding of how the surveys worked. It also highlighted the areas that London TravelWatch could usefully focus on in future.

The Chief Executive said that background relating to closer working between Transport Focus and London TravelWatch would be set out in a letter to Jeff Halliwell prior to the regular update meeting scheduled for September.

**Action: Chief Executive**

## 7 Key activities (LTW500)

The Chief Executive said that she had successfully pressed for the Travel Demand Management board to move into looking at lessons learned from unplanned disruption as well as considering planned disruption. However, she was concerned that the board would now meet quarterly rather than monthly and that the former Chair, Dave Ward of Network Rail, had now left. She said that Vernon Everitt had agreed to step in if necessary but it was important that the permanent chair be of sufficient seniority. She had stressed the importance of papers being sent for the board well in advance.

The Chair said that he had attended a number of events that were not mentioned in the report, including the Office of Rail and Road consumer expert panel and the London Assembly hearing on devolution. For completeness it would be helpful for events of this kind (which normally appear in the Policy committee schedule) to be recorded in future versions of this report.

Members asked about the outcome of the meeting with Leon Daniels at TfL in relation to the impact of congestion on bus performance. The Chief Executive said that Mr Daniels had recently written to London TravelWatch on this, in response to concerns raised previously by the board. She would circulate the letter, although it did not appear to address all of London TravelWatch's concerns.

**Action: Chief Executive**

In relation to the meeting with HS2 Ltd, the Director, Policy and Investigation, said that HS2 shared some of London TravelWatch's concerns about the permeability of Euston station under current proposals. The meeting had been useful and London TravelWatch awaited the detailed response to its petition on this issue.

## 8 Small stations (LTW501)

The Policy Officer presented a report on issues facing small stations in London. He said that for the purposes of this report, a small station was one that recorded less than one million entries and exits during a year and there were 200 small stations in the London TravelWatch rail area. Members noted that many "normal" commuter stations were caught by this definition even though they still served sizable numbers of passengers.

Members noted that the most recent Office of Rail and Road data on station usage was for 2013-14 and hoped the data for 2014-15 would be available soon. Some members raised a concern that some passenger entry and exit figures could be under-reported.

Members said that designating stations as 'commuter' based on the percentage of season tickets they sold risked overlooking those commuters who did not buy season tickets. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the designations and analysis was at an early stage as there was currently very little analysis to build on. Making some rough distinctions between stations helped with understanding the data.

Members agreed that London TravelWatch could lead in this overlooked area and that it was surprising that a quarter of all London stations, particularly the smaller and

medium sized stations, had never featured in the National Rail Passenger Survey sampling of journeys, either as a start or an end point.

Members asked how the train operators responded to requests to achieve 'quick wins' such as improving the station environment or providing better travel information. The Policy Officer (CW) said that responses varied with some being very responsive while others were less so. The responses tended to depend on where the operator was in its franchise timetable and whether there was any unspent funding available.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would produce a good practice guide for small stations in London. It was also agreed that officers would expand the table of London's small stations showing characteristics such as usage figures, accessibility, the use of season tickets and station facilities. The table should also include details of which local authority stations fell within, exits as well as entries, and should be capable of being searched and filtered.

**Action: Director, Policy and Investigation**

## **9 NRPS consultation**

The Chair stood down from the chair for this item due to a conflict of interest. This item was chaired by Ruth Thompson.

The acting Chair welcomed Keith Bailey, Senior Insight Adviser from Transport Focus. She noted that London TravelWatch had received Transport Focus's consultation document on proposed changes to the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) and would give it detailed consideration before making a formal response. In the meantime, members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals with Mr Bailey.

Mr Bailey said that the NRPS was intended to measure passenger satisfaction with individual train operators over time. Attempts to make the survey more detailed, for example to look at satisfaction with individual stations, stretched the NRPS from its original objective.

Transport Focus was consulting on changes to the NRPS to ensure that it stayed fit for purpose. Mr Bailey said Transport Focus wanted to check whether the questionnaire was the right length or whether people found it too long and intimidating. He also said that some train operators also received very high satisfaction scores, which, while welcome, did not give a great deal of insight into how to make services better. Other issues for consideration included whether sampling during the holiday period should be avoided and whether the gap before publication could be reduced.

Mr Bailey said that the NRPS also suffered from some historical anomalies, with varied sample sizes caused by changes to franchises.

The next version of the National Rail Transport Survey, conducted by the Department for Transport, was due in 2017 and provided the opportunity to make improvements to the NRPS. This meant that the Autumn 2015 survey would be conducted as normal, with the Spring and Autumn 2016 surveys including an

improved online version and major revisions going live for the whole survey from Spring 2017.

Mr Bailey said that the proposals would see some elements of the survey remain unchanged, while some questions would have to be lost and some may be rehoused elsewhere. Ambiguities in the current wording would be clarified.

The changes would hopefully result in better quality returns from higher response rates and the loss of the historical anomalies. There would be better value from the survey with the focus being back on core NRPS issues. A more collaborative approach with the train operators should also bring benefits.

Mr Bailey said that responses were open for all stakeholders and responses from organisations such as London TravelWatch were particularly welcome. Transport Focus aimed to publish the consultation responses by November.

Members welcomed the proposal to shorten the questionnaire. Mr Bailey said that a 4-page questionnaire had been piloted and although the overall response rate was similar to that for the longer version, the responses to individual questions were better in the shorter version. The response rate for the questionnaire had been declining for some time and he assumed it would continue to do so, so work in improving response rates was important.

Members suggested that using a shorter questionnaire might result in a better demographic spread of responses. Mr Bailey noted that the current online questionnaire resulted in better response rates among younger males and members of an ethnic minority, which was welcomed as it meant less weighting was required and the results were more robust.

Members expressed regret about the proposed loss of a question about the ability to board the train. Although the current question was ambiguous, if properly worded it could measure satisfaction with accessibility. They said that gaps between the train and platform were a barrier to use for many people, not just those with mobility impairments. Mr Bailey said that it may be possible to have a separate supplementary questionnaire on accessibility.

Members asked whether it would be possible to analyse the responses by time of day or day of the week. Mr Bailey said the sampling would allow for responses across the week but it was more difficult to do this for time of day. He said that Transport Scotland was moving to four survey periods each year and there was some call to make the survey a continuous exercise.

Mr Bailey agreed with members' concern that the survey options of 'fairly satisfied' and 'very satisfied' did not allow for enough nuance in the responses. He said that he was hoping to look at measuring trust or emotional feedback as part of the survey, perhaps in a supplementary questionnaire. A member noted that it was difficult to measure trust in relation to a single journey, which is what the survey asked about, and that passengers would need to think more widely in response to this question.

Mr Bailey said that he had not focused on the reporting aspect during the discussion. He said that a lot of analysis was produced for individual train operators but the published analysis was limited by physical constraints. He would

welcome feedback on whether any specific areas of analysis and reporting should be added.

A member asked whether Transport Focus had data on whether responses were received from individuals who had already submitted previous returns. Mr Bailey said this information was not kept.

A member asked whether responses were cross-checked and Mr Bailey said that there was some sense-checking relating the time of journey that the respondent claimed to have made.

Members thanked Mr Bailey for his presentation. They welcomed London TravelWatch's proposed role as a stakeholder and agreed that the organisation would seek to engage in the process. Further detailed comments on the consultation would be submitted in due course.

**Action: Director, Policy and Investigation**

## **10 Night bus changes**

Stephen Locke retook the chair for the remainder of the meeting. He welcomed Peter Bradley, Head of Consultation at Transport for London.

Mr Bradley discussed the current TfL consultation on proposed changes to night bus routes following the introduction of weekend night tube services in September. He said that the tube services had implications for night buses, including how passengers were able to get from the tube stops to suburban locations at night if night buses had not previously served those areas. In addition, some night bus routes might not be as well used if a new tube service was operating along its length.

He said that generally speaking, the frequencies of night buses at weekend were higher than during the week. None of the proposals would see weekend night bus levels reduce below the frequencies run during the week.

Some new routes and services were being proposed, all of which had at least one link to the night tube. It would improve services in areas of currently poor coverage. These areas might previously not have had much demand for night buses as they were located further away from the centre and might be regarded as too long a distance to travel by bus. However, with the introduction of night tubes, people might make part of the journey on the tube and want to complete it on a night bus.

Mr Bradley said that some night bus route frequencies would be reduced but that all of the changes would be kept under review.

In response to a question, Mr Bradley said that the performance of the night bus network was generally very good. Buses were monitored throughout their route using iBus and the routes and running times were periodically amended in response to the data.

Mr Bradley said that the consultation allowed the opportunity to make other improvements not directly related to the night tube, such as the all-night opening of Canada Water bus station.

Mr Bradley said that there had been around 3,300 responses to the consultation so far. The weekend night service proposals were receiving very positive responses, with the highest support being for the Croydon to Sutton route. Opposition came mainly from residents along routes that were having night buses for the first time. Both the new seven-night services had very high support.

Members asked how TfL ensured it consulted current night bus users. Mr Bradley said that it used Oyster card data to email users of relevant buses where possible.

In relation to the service reductions, the response was positive overall as people seemed to understand the link between the proposals and the tube service. The most negative responses related to those services whose frequencies were being reduced to 30 minutes, such as the 91 and 94. He thought it was likely that TfL would delay the introduction of the frequency reductions on these routes to see how the changes worked in practice. The reductions along the N20 route, which followed the High Barnet branch of the Northern line, as well as those on the N97, would probably be implemented.

Members asked how TfL would differentiate between buses running every night and those only operating at weekends. Mr Bradley said that there would be a new 24-hour logo that would say 'nightly' for services running all week or 'weekends' for others. This would be replicated on stops and timetables. On maps showing night bus routes, the nightly routes would be shown with solid line and the weekend routes with dotted lines.

Mr Bradley said the change would take around three weeks to implement, as around half the bus stops in London would need to be changed.

He said that if the start date for introducing the night tube was delayed by a short period, the start date for all changes would be moved back. If the night tube delay was substantial, some of the bus changes may be implemented separately.

Members asked whether any of the consultation respondents said that they preferred the bus to the tube. Mr Bradley said that some did but it should be remembered that no bus services were proposed for withdrawal.

Members asked what the plans were if one of the tube services should be suspended at night. Mr Bradley said that in central London there were 'standby' buses that could be called on to relieve problems caused by a suspension but he would take the question back for further consideration. Members emphasised that information for passengers was also important in those circumstances.

Mr Bradley said that TfL produced reports on the outcomes of consultation exercises that included a factual report of the responses and TfL's response to the issues raised. It was not usually practical to respond to people individually.

Members asked when TfL would review the way the new services were working. Mr Bradley said that TfL would be monitoring the operation immediately and responding very quickly to any teething problems. TfL recognised that it would take a while for travel patterns to change and also noted the introduction of night



tubes might change other aspects of society, with leisure and retail facilities opening later at night. The full review would probably begin at the end of winter.

Members asked whether extra staff would be available to assist passengers during the early stages of implementation. Mr Bradley said there were plans for this for the first couple of weekends.

Members noted that for some passengers, the cost of the night tube would be prohibitive when compared to the night bus.

Members asked whether the night bus review looked at areas served well by rail during the day but whose night bus coverage would not be increased and that did not benefit from the night tube. Members asked whether a 'night Overground' was under consideration to address this issue.

Mr Bradley said that the night bus network continued to develop and he would be interested to know of any significant gaps following implementation of the new proposals. He said that he met the Director, Policy and Investigation, regularly to review bus provision. Mr Bradley said that he would be happy to look at specific issues.

The Chair thanked Mr Bradley and said that the night tube represented a significant changes to the transport picture. In turn, this reflected, and could be expected to influence, the night time economy and behaviour, for example in relation to opening hours and shift working. A high degree of flexibility in response would be required.

**11 2016 meeting calendar (LTW502)**

The calendar of meetings for 2016 was agreed.

**12 Any other business**

There was no other business.

**13 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 reviewed the meeting.