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## Minutes

Agenda item: 6  
Drafted 07.12.16

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**Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 29 November 2016 at City Hall,  
London SE1 2AA**

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### Present

#### Members

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

#### Guests

Stephen O'Connor                      Transport for London consultation team

#### Members of the public

#### Secretariat

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

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

The Chair welcomed members and visitors to the meeting.

The Chair recorded London TravelWatch's formal sympathies for the friends and families of those who lost their lives in the recent Croydon Tram accident and also for those who were injured or witnessed the incident. It was too early to know the causes of the crash but officers were in contact with the Rail Safety and Standards Board and Transport for London and would have an appropriate level of involvement. He also wanted to record appreciation for the handling of the incident by the British Transport Policy and the Rail Accident Investigation Board.

The Chair noted that this would be the final board meeting for two members whose terms of appointment were concluding. He thanked Abdikafi Rage and Chris Brown for their work on behalf of transport users in London and wished them well in their future endeavours. He also reported that the Transport Committee of the London Assembly had approved the appointment of three new Board members, Jackie Ballard, Alan Benson and Abdi Osman, on four-year terms, and had reappointed Richard Dilks for a two-year term. He looked forward to working with them in the coming years.

The Chair reported on the successful Cycling Cities event that London TravelWatch had recently hosted. The event provided much food for thought over the period ahead and the Board would be considering actions at its next Governance Committee.

## **2 Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

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

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

The Chair said that he had attended a meeting with representatives from Transport Focus and others about proposals to introduce a Rail Ombudsman scheme as a final tier for casework appeals. Discussions on this continued. The Chair said that the board would receive a briefing when the details were clearer.

He said he had attended an informal meeting of the Transport Focus board to discuss progress with its workplan and had also attended a meeting of the Passenger Contact Group. There had been a Transport Focus board meeting in November which the Chair had been unable to attend which had focused on bus services outside London.

The Chair said he had met Paul Maynard MP, Minister for Transport, and that the meeting had been positive and useful with the Minister displaying real interest in London TravelWatch's work.

The Chair said he had given evidence on 10 October to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee Inquiry on rail franchising. In addition, he and the Chief Executive had given evidence the following day to the London Assembly Transport Committee on London TravelWatch's business plan and had also been asked about the review of closures of London Underground ticket offices. The ticket office review had not yet been published and Assembly Members had sought reassurance of the review's independence from TfL. This would need to be explained clearly in the report when published.

The Chair said he had attended the regular quarterly meeting with the Rail Delivery Group, where the relationship with the new management was proving

very productive. He had also received appreciative letters from Mike Brown, Commissioner for Transport, about London TravelWatch's infrastructure report, and from Lord Ahmad, the Under Secretary of State for Transport, about franchising and devolution. He was due to meet Lord Ahmad shortly and would discuss these issues further.

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 September 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to amending the word 'he' in the second line of page 2 to 'members of the Board and staff'.

## **6 Matters arising (LTW536)**

John Stewart said that he spoken at the London Assembly Transport Committee and noted that accessibility would be a high priority for the new Mayor of London. He said that this might be relevant in relation to decisions about step-free access to Central line platforms at Bank underground station. The Chief Executive said she had spoken to David McNeill at Transport for London about this issue and that TfL would be reporting further in the new year. She hoped London TravelWatch's comments would be incorporated in the report.

## **7 Key activities (LTW537)**

The Policy Officer (RN) said that he had attended a useful meeting with Stagecoach to discuss the South West franchise and noted that both bidders had been willing to engage with London TravelWatch. However, the Department for Transport had not been as constructive. The Chair said he was disappointed that the DfT had not approached London TravelWatch to assess the passenger-facing elements of the bids, despite a clear commitment on the part of DfT ministers and officials to make provision for this, and appreciation for our contribution in the past. If London TravelWatch's role in bid assessments were reduced or sidelined, there was a significant risk that London passengers' interests would not get the necessary priority. This issue would be raised in discussions with Lord Ahmad and others at the DfT.

The Chief Executive said that she had met Chris Gibb, the leader of the review into Southern's performance, in the past week and that he had given the confidential briefing he had also given to Chris Grayling MP, the Secretary of State for Transport. She was unable to give information about this presentation but said she was encouraged by its findings. Mr Gibb was well respected in the industry and had access to many key people. She said that if his recommendations were taken forward, they would make a positive difference for passengers.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that he had contributed to a discussion about car sharing with the Institute for Public Policy Research as part of their work on transport strategy for the Mayor's office. This formed part of the wider discussion about road use and pricing in the context of increased levels of congestion.

The Policy Officer (RN) said that in his role as Safety Adviser he had participated in the Rail Safety and Standards Board's project on announcements on trains. The project was considering issues such as the frequency and content of announcements and the best way of providing information to passengers. The review was initiated following incidents where passengers had taken action that put themselves in danger, such as alighting from trains onto live tracks, when better provision of information may have prevented this happening.

It was noted that officers had made progress with London TravelWatch's longstanding calls for rail compensation to be paid after delays of 15 minutes and with improving systems for making compensation payments.

Members noted that there had been several meetings about Crossrail works due to take place over the Christmas holiday. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the works would be very disruptive on two sides of London, with the closure of Paddington station in the west and most of the Great Eastern mainline through Shenfield in the east. In addition, the District line would be closed between Acton Town and Gloucester Road. There would be diversions onto the Central line but this line would already be busy with travel to White City and Westfield.

Ealing Broadway station would be the terminating point for trains that would ordinarily carry on into Paddington, but as it only had four platforms capacity would clearly be an issue, and also was not step-free.

Members noted that the Piccadilly line would be the only rail access to Heathrow Airport over the Christmas holiday but that the Piccadilly line was currently severely disrupted as rolling stock was reduced to allow for maintenance work. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said he had been pleased that his recommendations relating to the Finsbury Park enquiry had been adopted. However, he was concerned that Heathrow Express was refusing to rota staff at Paddington station during the closure period, which could mean passengers arriving at Paddington and not being offered assistance to reach Heathrow. He would continue to work on this. Members noted that the works presented significant potential for passenger detriment.

## **8 Bus consultation (LTW538)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, introduced a report on proposals by TfL to reconfigure bus routes and capacity in the central London area. He said the proposed changes were major and would see the biggest change in transport arrangements in central London since the introduction of the congestion charge. He said that officers usually responded to bus consultations under delegated authority but these proposals were so significant it was appropriate to seek the views of the Board.

The Chair introduced Stephen O'Connor from TfL's consultation team, who gave a presentation on the proposals. Mr O'Connor explained that the proposals were the response to several issues, particularly the decline of bus speeds in the central area, which was affecting how the service could be operated across London and how people chose to use the buses. The proposals also related to the Mayor's ambition to remove buses from Oxford Street and to the likely impact on bus use from the introduction of Crossrail. The proposals affected a total of 23 bus routes

in the central area and would lead of a net reduction of buses in Oxford Street of 40%.

The loss of bus services on Oxford Street would have a knock-on effect on other routes in the area, which this review sought to address. The changes to routes needed to be considered alongside issues such as locations for buses to stand and turn, as well as facilities for drivers, in addition to passenger demand.

In response to questions, Mr O'Connor said that the proposals relating to specific bus routes followed analysis of changes to demand, such as that expected following the opening of Crossrail. This would lead to changes in the Paddington area and around Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street.

Mr O'Connor said that the most significant alteration would be to route 23, which would be curtailed at the eastern end so that it would no longer serve Liverpool Street station and be extended at the western end to serve areas west of Paddington. Demand on this route was likely to continue to fall and passengers would be better served by stops at Paddington station, where they could interchange with Crossrail. Mr O'Connor said that some passengers would have to change buses as a result of the changes but he hoped that overall the measures would benefit passengers.

Mr O'Connor said another significant change would be to route 73, which would no longer serve Victoria station but terminate at Oxford Circus, with route 390 serving Victoria instead.

The Chief Executive noted that passengers would need detailed information if the changes went ahead. Mr O'Connor said that TfL would make as much information as possible available to passengers.

The Chair said that TfL's figures showed that over 17,000 people a day would need to interchange in future who were currently able to complete their journey on one bus. It would be important to look at the quality of each individual interchange, to make it as easy to navigate as possible. Mr O'Connor said that TfL had sophisticated Oyster data that indicated where the largest volumes of interchange would be and it was working to introduce same-stop interchange where possible.

The Chair asked what would be the impact of additional waiting times following the increased number of interchanges. Mr O'Connor said that frequencies on routes would largely remain the same so waiting times would generally be quite short.

Members noted that some people would resist using the rail or underground network and would only use buses, for reasons including price and accessibility. However, the proposals appeared to assume that people would be happy to interchange to Crossrail, even for relatively short journeys. Members asked how much consideration had been given to passengers who would only use buses and Mr O'Connor said that the data did take account of these passengers.

Members expressed the concern that most passengers would be unlikely to engage with the proposals until their bus routes actually changed and that it would be important for TfL to put robust data in place about the benefits of the changes. There was a risk that once the proposals were implemented, TfL would receive a good deal of criticism and lose much of its goodwill. The Policy Officer said there

would be clear benefits for people who did not regularly use buses but disbenefits for many bus users, especially those who would now have to wait for two buses to complete a journey.

Mr O'Connor said that the consultation on these proposals would close in January and a consultation on Oxford Street regeneration more generally would take place in April. Members noted that the scheduling of the changes would be complex. For example, changes to route 23 were dependent on the implementation of Crossrail, but may need to be introduced before Crossrail opened to meet the aspirations for Oxford Street. Mr O'Connor said that there may need to be interim arrangements between Oxford Street closing and Crossrail opening but this was not confirmed yet.

It was noted that Green Park station was the only accessible underground station in central London and that moving the C2 route away from Green Park made accessing the underground in central London more difficult for those with mobility impairments. In addition, passengers with Freedom Passes did not need to touch in on Oyster readers so their travelling habits might not have been identified when putting these proposals together. The Director, Policy and Investigation, suggested linking together the C2 and 22 routes in order to retain the links currently available to passengers on the C2.

The Chair said that London TravelWatch acknowledged the need for change but there were major issues of deep concern. He said that timing was important and that changes should dovetail with other initiatives such as the opening of Crossrail. Interchanges should be high quality and accessibility levels should, at the least, be maintained, or be improved where possible. In addition, clear information for passengers was essential and would be necessary even after the changes were implemented. It was also important to build in the opportunity for review.

The Chair thanked Mr O'Connor and said that officers would submit the response to the consultation in due course and update members as necessary.

## **9 Any other business**

There was no other business.

## **10 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 the review of London Underground ticket office closures and cycling in London and reviewed the meeting.