
Minutes

Agenda item 5
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 14 January 2014 at City Hall.

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Vernon Everitt Managing Director of Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications, TfL (Item 7)
Stuart Reid Director of Travel Demand Management Programme, TfL (Item 7)

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 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 the standing declarations.

4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

The Chair said that he had attended his regular update meeting with Val Shawcross AM, the Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee. They agreed that London TravelWatch and the London Assembly should continue to work closely and in the run-up to the next London TravelWatch business plan London TravelWatch should offer to meet all constituency based Assembly members plus the Transport Committee leads to get their views.

Action: Chief Executive

It was noted that Caroline Pidgeon AM would take the chair of the Transport Committee from April.

The Chair said he had held one-to-ones with all London TravelWatch members in the run-up to Christmas. He had been left feeling positive about members' engagement and role. Some members had raised whether it would be possible to take on some 'champion' roles in future, for example in relation to public engagement. This would need to be managed carefully but the idea is being considered further.

Action: Chair

The Chair said there had been a members event for the Passenger Focus board in February on franchising, looking both at the policy in general and at Passenger Focus's direct input to evaluation of the bids as a means of supporting the Department for Transport's franchising arrangements. He was keen to ensure that London TravelWatch also had input on franchises that impacted on London passengers. A Policy Officer had been reviewing the bids for the Essex Thames-side and Thameslink Southern Great Northern franchises in order to put forward a commentary on the bids from a passenger perspective. The outcome was still to be determined but this form of involvement was a very positive step for London TravelWatch. It was hoped that the arrangements could be developed further in future.

The Chair said that Passenger Focus was in the process of undertaking research in the area of trust and confidence in the train operating companies as a complement to the research on individual journeys. He said that as part of the statistics governance group he had also been looking at the detailed methodology of passenger surveys for bus, train and tram users.

The Chief Executive said that the 2014-15 budget bid had been submitted to the Transport Committee of the Greater London Authority but the finalised budget would not be confirmed until later in the year. When the details were known the

budget would be recast as appropriate and returned to members for final consideration.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

6 Matters arising (LTW4457)

In relation to TfL's service targets, it was noted that London TravelWatch should look at services beyond the bus network. It was also noted that London TravelWatch was not necessarily asking for targets to be revised, but was keen to have access to data in order to increase its monitoring role.

The Policy Officer said he had met John Barry of TfL to discuss buses and the possibility of introducing new targets relating to speed of journey and crowding. TfL was working towards a system that would help them understand the speed of services but measuring crowding was more difficult. Fewer manual passenger counts were being undertaken since the introduction of the iBus system so data had to be collated by other means, such as through interrogating Oyster records. The Policy Officer said international benchmarking showed there were no current easy options for measuring crowding being used in other areas. Members agreed that crowding was important to passengers and so options for measuring it should be pursued.

In relation to statistics for usage of the cycle hire system, the Policy Officer said that the system was regularly expanding so it was difficult to measure trends from a stable position.

The Communications Officer agreed to circulate dates for the Enfield area stakeholder engagement event as soon as had had a response from Greater Anglia.

In relation to the action on night travel, the Chief Executive said a high-level officer meeting had taken place and the issue was also pencilled in for consideration at a future Board meeting. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the officer meeting had been reassuring and that future discussions would take place about the local implications for night buses of night tube operation. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would keep a watching brief on this issue for the present.

7 Key activities (LTW458)

It was noted that Vernon Everitt and Stuart Reid would address some of the issues arising from the seasonal closures in the next item. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that London TravelWatch supported train operation on Boxing Day and supported its inclusion in franchises but found there was not much appetite for it at the DfT. TfL were more supportive.

In relation to the meeting at Stansted Airport, the Chief Executive said that London TravelWatch received a lot of feedback from users that the Stansted Express

customer service was acceptable but there were often failings with the infrastructure, which often led to delays. London TravelWatch had no remit in relation to coach services to Stansted.

It was noted that London Midland continued to experience poor performance. Their policy of paying drivers considerably less than their competitors meant that they needed to continually recruit and train new staff, which ran the risk of being disruptive to passengers.

It was noted that Baroness Kramer's letter welcoming London TravelWatch's ideas on accessibility was very positive and reflected well on the organisation.

8 Managing travel demand

Vernon Everitt, Managing Director of Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications, and Stuart Reid, Director of the Travel Demand Management Programme at TfL, gave a presentation on how travel demand management worked, how it was used during the closures over the festive period and plans for the future.

Mr Everitt said TfL's priorities were to get the most from the existing transport network, deliver the capital upgrade programme and put customers at the centre of decision-making. TfL was seeking to support these objectives through the travel demand management (TDM) programme, giving passengers more information, being more transparent, so that passengers could make better decisions, especially in relation to avoiding congested areas. TDM also took lessons from the Olympic Games in relation to partnership working between TfL and train operators. This partnership approach and pooled knowledge was a real step-change and positive move for the industry.

Mr Reid said that during the festive period both TfL and Network Rail had planned engineering works that affected the usual timetables. There were also a series of events to be factored in, such as new years eve, the parade on new years day and several football matches. Operators and Network Rail already had advanced relations in order to manage potential conflicts, for example TfL had proposed to close a southern stretch of the Northern line but this would have added to problems caused by the closure between Clapham Junction and Waterloo stations and so the Northern line had not been closed.

Mr Reid said that the TDM programme aimed to give passengers enough information to be able to make informed choices about their travel. It was no longer enough to give information about restrictions, operators now needed to provide options in order to enable travel. This required operators to join up their information services. The industry focus had primarily been on the closures at Gatwick Airport station with a lot of work being done to inform passengers of options for those journeys.

The work over the festive period helped convince operators of the value of a collaborative approach, especially in relation to Network Rail. There were also smaller tactical lessons, such as the presentation of travel information on a day-by-day basis rather than by route and the need to collate information as early as possible.

Mr Reid said that he was working on a project to release information to passengers about the 42 busiest London Underground stations, showing congestion in the

morning peak in the form of a bar chart with 15-minute increments. The information would be accompanied by advice on alternative travel options, focussing on key destinations.

Mr Reid said that a pilot had begun on the Northern line to try to encourage passengers to travel outside the peak of the peak. Giving passengers highly personalised information about their journeys was very demanding of the IT system and staff were trying to find ways of presenting the information to passengers. Mr Everitt said he would share the findings of the pilot with London TravelWatch at a later date if required.

A member asked whether it would be possible for the Countdown system at stations to include information about capacity on the services due. Mr Everitt said TfL was looking at ways to give passengers loading information and said that a very small shift in behaviour of 1% to 2% in the peak would alleviate the problems. Mr Reid noted that it was not possible to identify those people who might be able to change their journey habits through usual demographic filters, TfL needed consumers to take the initiative on the basis of information provided.

In response to questions, Mr Reid said that TfL was analysing Oyster data in order to understand passenger behaviour and had worked with behaviour change experts on this. TfL had also worked with employers in particular areas, for example in relation to the construction at London Bridge station it had worked with the London Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, the CBI, local Business Improvement Districts and major employers such as Price Waterhouse Coopers, Ernst & Young and Guys Hospital.

Mr Reid said that in the long term the aspiration was to for operators to collaborate with Network Rail on bringing all planned engineering works into a single database. This was a large undertaking that would take several years to complete.

Mr Everitt said that in operational terms staff at the senior levels of TfL and Network Rail worked closely together and this was especially true during periods such as the festive closures. For example, there had been discussions between the organisations about communications with passengers during disruption caused by a landslip over the festive period.

It was noted that Network Rail responded to expected stormy conditions on Christmas Eve earlier than TfL and gave passengers information on revised Christmas Eve services on the day before. TfL did not give passengers revised information until the morning of Christmas Eve. Mr Everitt said that TfL took the view that its services would run as planned, so there was no need to update passengers, whereas Network Rail knew it would run a reduced service and needed to give this information to passengers as early as possible. It was noted that TfL's passengers might have been reassured by messages saying that it intended to run the planned service on Christmas Eve despite the storms.

Mr Reid said that many of TfL's information processes required manual updating but they were moving towards being able to take data feeds directly from Network Rail. This would be easier if Network Rail freely syndicated their information, which they did not do at present.

Members probed further whether information about congestion could be made available to passengers on existing Countdown systems. Mr Reid said that TfL was doing a feasibility study on providing information on crowding, for example the Jubilee line captured data on loading based on weight but on other lines this information was only available 24 hours in arrears. Other tools such as gateline data or crowdsourced information could also be options. He hoped to be able to improve online journey planners to integrate crowding data across operators.

A member asked whether bus drivers had access to information about their routes, such as unexpected or unplanned station closures, so that they could inform passengers of problems before they alighted. It could be frustrating for passengers to get off a bus to transfer to a station only to find that the station was closed and the bus driver had been aware of this and could have advised passengers to remain on board. Mr Everitt said this was difficult because of drivers' limited role but work was underway on improving integration here.

Members asked how long the upgrade programme would take and how much long-term disruption was expected. Mr Everitt said that the Jubilee, Victoria and Northern line upgrades were nearly complete but the sub-surface lines were still in need of upgrading, as were the Picadilly and Bakerloo lines, and this would impact on different parts of the network. There was a great deal of work to catch up on and no meaningful end-date to the programme. The customer benefit of upgrading was that the Victoria and Jubilee lines were running at a frequency unrivalled anywhere in the world.

The Chair thanked Mr Everitt and Mr Reid for their presentation and interesting discussion.

9 Consultation on local authority parking (LTW459)

The Policy Officer presented a report on proposed changes to local authority parking arrangements. He highlighted two areas of concern for London TravelWatch. Firstly that loss of CCTV enforcement of parking restrictions in bus lanes would result in bus lanes in central areas becoming congested by illegal parking. Secondly that allowing a grace period at loading bays would also be unenforceable and would result in loading bays becoming de facto short-term parking bays with loading being displaced elsewhere.

The Policy Officer said that CCTV had been hugely important in enforcing bus lane parking restrictions and lack of enforcement in the past had been significantly detrimental to bus services. Members noted that the consultation had a national scope but the situation in London was very different to that in much of the rest of the country. It would be important to note that in the response, and to ensure the response was well-balanced in tone rather than confrontational.

Members noted that one of London TravelWatch's 10 passenger priorities for the new Mayoral term was the enforcement of regulations, which this recommendation was consistent with. In addition, much of the work London TravelWatch had carried out on accessible bus stops would be wasted if buses could not pull up to the kerb. It was felt that, in responding, there was plenty of scope for London TravelWatch's approach to appear more evidence based than the consultation paper itself.

Members noted that loading bays were a necessary part of the traffic management system and should be safeguarded as they served an important purpose. Members also noted that the proposals would have detrimental knock-on impacts on pedestrians and cyclists and would also negatively affect car drivers through a reduction in journey time reliability.

Members strongly endorsed the position set out in the report, subject to adding a note at the start recognising the need to balance the requirements of all road users. Members recognised that enforcement could be frustrating for motorists who wanted to quickly pop to the shop, but CCTV was vital for managing road space. The recommendations in relation to the introduction of “grace periods” for parking restrictions were also agreed: the proposals would cause material damage to other transport users, although members recognised that the situation outside London may be different.

The Policy Officer agreed to respond to the consultation document in line with members’ comments.

Action: Policy Officer

10 London travelling environment: what consumers think (LTW460)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented the London TravelWatch report into passengers’ views of the travelling environment. He said the research showed ways in which the travelling environment influenced decisions about travelling, including highlighting passengers’ concerns about issues such as large gaps between train doors and platform edges.

It was agreed that the findings of the report should be raised as appropriate with individual transport operators with the aim of improving the travelling experience for passengers.

Members welcomed the report and thanked officers for the work involved in its production.

11 Memorandum of Understanding (LTW461)

The Chair said that the new Memorandum of Understanding had been approved by the Transport Committee of the London Assembly. Members noted the report.

12 Appointment of subsidiary bodies (LTW462)

The report on the appointment of subsidiary bodies was noted.

13 Any other business

There was no other business.

14 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 London TravelWatch communications strategy and reviewed the meeting.