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**Secretariat memorandum**

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Agenda item 6

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**Casework report****1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To record progress within the Casework Team and to provide some preliminary information on the performance for the period January to March 2010.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report is received for information.

**3 Casework database and workload issues**

- 3.1 It became evident during the last reporting period that there were a number of difficulties in compiling performance data due to the fact that caseworkers were still getting used to the new database and the reports on the system were compiled in such a way as to make auditing of them quite difficult and time consuming.
- 3.2 Since these issues have come to light, we have been working with the contractor on changes to the reports and with caseworkers to ensure that information is recorded accurately. As with any database system, the new system relies on recording accurately the actions they have undertaken on a case. So, for example, once a referral has been sent to an operator, the caseworker must also remember to mark the action as complete the same day as the actual action was completed because it cannot be backdated.
- 3.3 The revised reports have now been provided by the contractor, and are proving more effective at providing the performance data we need, but still require further iteration. Nevertheless, more time is required to ensure that the data is fully audited.
- 3.4 With the increasing use of email, there has been an increasing trend for complainants to contact us again, sometimes, about a case after we have sent a final reply. Sometimes this is repeatedly, if they are chasing up promised compensation or where further clarification is required for example, but often we receive further correspondence where the complainant disagrees with the policy or does not like the response received. We recognise that, as a result, we can spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with cases from persistent complainants. Additional work undertaken in relation to a case, while it may be placed in the electronic file, does not currently form part

of the reporting process. As a result, we under-report the amount of work being undertaken by the team on these cases.

- 3.5 In the past, we have tended possibly to continue correspondence for longer than we should. Therefore where the caseworker considers that they are unable to take the matter further, we will expect them to make this clear in their letter and to advise the complainant of this. We will suggest that they contact the Local Government Ombudsman if they are not content.
- 3.6 Using the new database, we have been able to undertake an analysis of our busy times for telephone enquiries to ensure that the appropriate level of casework staffing is available at all times of the day. Background information has also been provided for the benchmarking study and Greater London Authority audit (further to the previous meeting, casework successes are being distributed regularly to members and the Casework Manager is responsible for ensuring that this information continues to be circulated).

#### **4 Performance reports**

- 4.1 These reports track the performance of the team in dealing with all cases received in a period for Targets 1, 2 and 5, for the time taken for operators to respond for Target 3, and for us to close cases for Target 4. As such, while we can report on how quickly we are acknowledging cases, we are not able to give a complete picture of performance on all targets until about 40 working days after the end of a reporting period. This means a delay in reporting performance to this Committee, traditionally leading to reports on the previous quarter coming to Committee some three months after the end of the reporting period.
- 4.2 We recognise that there is a strong desire amongst members and our sponsors for performance data to be provided more quickly. The new Casework Manager commenced employment on 29 March and will be responsible for monitoring performance on an ongoing basis, so where there has been insufficient time to provide a fully-audited set of performance data for a quarter in time for the Consumer Affairs Committee, some data will be made available.
- 4.3 Part 1 records performance against the targets 1 and 2 for the period from January to March 2010. This will be followed by a full report to the next meeting setting out performance to the remaining targets and an analysis of questionnaire responses.
- 4.4 Part 2 analyses issues received by operator for the period from January to March 2010.
- 4.5 Part 3 provides a performance update on the number of cases open on the database as of 5 May 2010 and their status.

#### **5 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 5.1 Due account will be taken whenever any such implications arise from cases brought to the attention of London TravelWatch.

## **6 Legal powers**

- 6.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and, where it appears to it to be desirable, to make representations with respect to – any matter affecting the services and facilities provided by Transport for London which relate to transport (other than freight) and which have been the subject of representations made to it by or on behalf of users of those services and facilities. Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon it in respect of representations received from users or potential users of railway passenger services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area.

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.

## Part 1 : Case handling (January to March 2010)

### Purpose of report

To record the proficiency of London TravelWatch and of the relevant transport operators in dealing with appeals cases received and referred during the period January to March 2010. The report covers cases received up to and including 31 March 2010.

### Target One

This target requires the Casework Team to acknowledge all newly received appeal cases and record them in its database within five working days. Cases which are dealt with directly, as opposed to being referred to an operator, are recorded under Target 5. The exception is consultation responses which we have decided to acknowledge as a full response as these cannot be sent prior to the end of the consultation and/or a decision by the Board. The table below shows the performance achieved during the period under review, together with that in the preceding six months (*in italics*).

During the reporting period, 94.9% of cases were acknowledged within five working days, and 98.4% were acknowledged within ten working days. This represents a decline in performance compared with the previous period, although the volume of appeals received increased by about 27% over the previous period. Further analysis of these 13 cases revealed that the cases that were not being acknowledged promptly were those being forwarded by Passenger Focus and those where initial cases then became appeals. We have now changed procedures to ensure that cases forwarded by Passenger Focus are acknowledged the same day by a Casework Assistant and where initial cases are escalated to an appeal, a new case reference and acknowledgement are provided.

Working days Elapsed	January to March 2010		<i>October to December 2009</i>	
	No of cases	% of cases	<i>No of cases</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
Days 0-5	244	<b>94.9%</b>	<i>197</i>	<i><b>97.5%</b></i>
Days 6-10	9	3.5%	<i>3</i>	<i>1.5%</i>
Days 11-20	4	1.6%	<i>2</i>	<i>1.0%</i>
Days 21+	0	0.0%	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
Total	257	100.0%	<i>202</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

## Target Two

This target requires the Casework Team to refer 75% of all newly-received cases to the relevant operator for attention within five working days, and 100% within ten working days. The table below shows the performance achieved during the period under review, together with that in the preceding quarter (*in italics*).

During the period, January to March 2010, 75.3% of cases were referred to operators within five working days, compared with 75.1% during the previous quarter. In addition, 90.7% were referred to the relevant operator within ten working days, compared with 89.1% during the previous quarter. This represents an improvement in performance as compared with the previous period, despite the fact that the number of appeals referred increased by 34% over the previous period.

Working days Elapsed	January to March 2010		<i>October to December 2009</i>	
	No of cases	% of cases	<i>No of cases</i>	<i>% of cases</i>
Days 0-5	195	<b>75.3%</b>	<i>145</i>	<i>75.1%</i>
Days 6-10	40	<b>15.4%</b>	<i>27</i>	<i>14.0%</i>
Days 11-20	21	8.1%	<i>15</i>	<i>7.8%</i>
Days 21+	3	1.2%	<i>6</i>	<i>3.1%</i>
Total	259	100.0%	<i>193</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

As outlined above, performance on Target 3, 4 and 5 will form part of the next report to this Committee.

## Part 2 : Issues by operator

### Purpose of report

To record the volume of casework received during the period January to March 2010. A total of 2873 cases were opened on the database which generated 2931 complaints. Of these, 1847 were enquiries and 396 were initials and were signposted or forwarded to the relevant operator for action.

The remainder were either taken up with the relevant operator on behalf of the complainant or were responded to direct. There were a number of consultation cases relating to proposed changes to ticket office opening hours on Chiltern and South West Trains. A full breakdown of the casework by operator is provided below.

Issues	January to March 2010
Enquiries	1847
Initial cases	396
Appeal cases	276
Consultation cases	88
Direct cases	314
Member cases	1
Officer cases	9
Number of complaints	2931

Count of Issue	Case Type							
Operator	Appeal	Consultation	Direct	Enquiry	Initial	Member	Officer	Grand Total
Abellio London				2				2
Abellio Surrey				2				2
Arriva Kent Thameside			1					1
Arriva London North				1				1
ATOC	1		3	1				5
C2C Rail	4		1	22	6			33
Chiltern Railways	2	9	3	6	3			23
Congestion Charging			1	4	1			6
Department for Transport			1	3				4
Dial-a-Ride	1			14	4			19
Docklands Buses					1			1
Docklands Light Railway	1		2	210	9		1	223
East Coast	4				1			5
East Coast Main Line					1			1
East Midlands Trains	2			8	4			14
Eurostar	8		1	18	8			35
First Beeline (Slough)				1				1
First Capital Connect	36		46	112	65			259
First Great Western	7		2	6	2			17
First Hull Trains			1					1
Heathrow Express				2				2
Independent Appeals Service (IAS)	3		7	11	4			25
IPFAS	7		25	11	6			49
Local Government Ombudsman				1				1
London Borough of Lambeth			1					1
London Buses	23		129	970	50		1	1173
London Buses Customer Services Centre	1							1
London Councils				16	3			19
London Midland	2		2	6	7			17
London Overground	4		4	5	8			21
London Tramlink					1			1
London TravelWatch			3	3				6
London Underground	14		10	18	21			63
National Express					1			1
National Express East Anglia	13		7	18	5		2	45
National Rail Enquiries	1		2	121	1			125
National Railways Timetable				1				1
Network Rail	7		1	5				13
Oyster Helpline	13		2	20	15			50
Passenger Focus	1		1	11	14			27
Public Carriage Office	1			1				2
Rail Europe			1					1
RPSS			3	1	1			5
South West Trains	19	78	10	9	19			135
Southeastern			6	11	26			43

Count of Issue	Case Type							
Operator	Appeal	Consultation	Direct	Enquiry	Initial	Member	Officer	Grand Total
Southeastern Railway	29		10	3	12		1	55
Southern	10		9	16	11			46
Trainline	2		1	1	1			5
Tramtrack Croydon Limited			1	1	1			3
Transport for London	51	1	13	126	73	1	4	269
Transport for London River Services			1	3				4
Transport for London Streets	1		2	9	2			14
Victoria Coach Station				1				1
Virgin Trains	8		1	33	9			51
(blank)								
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2928</b>



### Part 3 : Performance Update

As at 5 May 2010, the number of cases open on the casework database was 197. Of these, 112 were awaiting an operators' response and 17 were awaiting further correspondence from the complainant.

Case Stage	Case Type						Grand Total
	Appeal	Direct	Enquiry	Initial	Member	Officer	
Awaiting operators' response	98	1	4	6	1	2	112
Awaiting response from complainant	11		4	2			17
Case Received	7	7	11	8			33
Escalated	3	2					5
Under Consideration	18	3	5	1	1	2	30
Grand Total	137	13	24	17	2	4	197

## Annex A: Case Types and Stages

Case Type	Explanation
Appeals	Cases we take up on behalf of the complainant. We refer these to the appropriate operator(s) and consider the response we receive from them.
Consultation	Cases that are subject to consultation. For example, cases received as part of the proposed changes to booking office hours by First Capital Connect where we would respond once a Board decision has been made.
Direct cases	Cases where we respond directly to a complaint, without going to the operator, either because we know the answer, have already got an agreed policy on the issue or we have no remit e.g. penalty fare cases which have followed the correct procedure.
Enquiries	These are requests for information, and are dealt with primarily by telephone. For many enquiries, we act as a signpost informing complainants who the most appropriate operator is to deal with their complaint or request for information or to register a lost property request.
Initials	Cases which have not yet been dealt with by the appropriate transport company. We pass to the appropriate operator and inform the complainant that we have done so
Members	Cases raised on behalf of London TravelWatch members
Officers	Cases raised on behalf of London TravelWatch officers

Case Stage	Explanation
Awaiting operators' response	Cases which are awaiting a response from the operator
Awaiting referral	New cases which await referral
Awaiting response from complainant	A request for further information has been sent to the complainant
Case Received	New cases awaiting action.
Escalated	Cases which have been escalated to a higher level with an operator, to a regulatory body or to a committee
Under Consideration	Direct cases awaiting a response or appeal cases where an operators' response has been received
Blank	Cases requiring classification