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## Confidential Minutes

Agenda item: 6  
Drafted: 15.10.19

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### Confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 October 2019 at Europoint, 5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

These minutes are in addition to the public minutes of a meeting of the Board on the same date. The Board 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 this part of the meeting.

#### Contents

1. **Chief Executive report**
2. **Transport User Priorities** (LTW608)
3. **Hail and Ride** (LTW609)
4. **Any other business**
5. **Minutes and declarations of interest**

#### Present

##### Members

Alan Benson, Safia Iman, Arthur Leathley (Chair), Karen McArthur, Laura Osborne, Abdi Osman

##### Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Richard Freeston-Clough	Operations and Communications Manager
Saphia Haffejee	Policy Officer
Luke Muskett	Committee and Public Liaison Officer
Trevor Rosenberg	Policy Officer
Joanna Simons	Chief Executive
Vincent Stops	Senior Policy Officer

#### 1 Chief Executive report

The Chief Executive began by giving an update with regards to staffing. There had been a month's consultation which had resulted in the proposals to make David Rose and John Wooster redundant confirmed. John Wooster had been granted an additional notice period until the end of the financial year to allow him more time to find a new role. In addition, two other members of staff, Keletha Barrett and Gytha Chinweze, had asked for voluntary redundancy, which had been reluctantly accepted.

The Chief Executive stated that the London Assembly Transport Committee had agreed London TravelWatch's budget bid and business plan which included the proposed increase in the base budget for next year of £98,000 plus an additional one off sum of £95,000 in this year to cope with current pressures. She remarked that this would help with settling the redundancy payments for those staff that would be leaving London TravelWatch and would allow us to end the year with a balanced budget. The

Chief Executive stated that losing people would have an effect on the organisation, although Michelle Jackson and Jon Carter from Transport Focus were helping to ensure there was a smooth transition to the new joint working partnership.

The Chief Executive said that work had begun to help staff get to know each other with staff moving between offices to work with their new colleagues and that more would be done over coming months. A member asked what morale was like among the team. The Committee and Public Liaison Officer replied that he was sad to see people leave but happy for those that wanted to take the opportunity to do something different. The Director, Policy and Investigation said that some people were enthusiastic about the new arrangement with Transport Focus whilst others were more wary and he was concerned that good people were leaving the organisation.

The Director, Policy and Investigation said that people that came to work at London TravelWatch did not do so for the money but because they believed in the ethos of the organisation and that they were working to achieve things on behalf of passengers. He commented that there was a feeling that some of the good work that had been done in previous years was being 'swept away'.

A member asked whether staff viewed Transport Focus in a similar way. The Director replied that he was unsure though stated that Transport Focus has had a different way of operating than that of London TravelWatch. He added that people felt that they had not always appreciated their way of working despite being quite successful in achieving results for passengers. The member suggested that some work could be done to speak to staff to see where they saw the value in London TravelWatch and the parts of the working culture that needed to be retained.

**ACTION: Chief Executive**

The Director, Policy and Investigation said that there was also a danger that outside bodies saw the new arrangement between London TravelWatch and Transport Focus as a merger rather than a joint partnership. In order to address that, he suggested that a public statement be issued to tell people what was the true intention of the plans. The Chief Executive remarked that there would initially be a 'soft launch' to announce the new arrangement, and we would think about the wider communications around that. In terms of staffing and work cultures, Vikki Maxfield from Transport Focus had been appointed to look at change management and to understand the current mood within the team.

The Chief Executive stated that on Friday 18 October Transport Focus would be holding an all staff meeting and colleagues at London TravelWatch had been invited to attend. They would also be holding a staff away day in January, which would enable the two teams to get to know each other better. The Chair stated that now was the time to be more open about the new joint working arrangement with external stakeholders. He suggested that a letter could be sent out from him announcing it.

**ACTION: Operations and Communications Manager**

The Chief Executive stated that it would take some time to produce a final draft setting out the partnership agreement with Transport Focus and this would be a work in progress for the time being. Also, the memorandum of understanding with the GLA would need to be updated to reflect the new relationship between London TravelWatch and Transport Focus.

A member said that through moving into shared offices this would send an external message saying that the two organisations were merging. He suggested that they would have to state very clearly that this was not the case. The Chair agreed that it would be difficult to stop that perception from forming in peoples' minds. The Chief Executive said that she did not believe that this would be the case and that there were numerous examples of different organisations that shared the same office space but kept their identities separate. The member suggested that once the new director role was filled it would help in showing that London TravelWatch was a different organisation to Transport Focus.

The Chief Executive said that money was tight though the organisation was projected to be within budget by the end of the year. A member said that she would like to have more confidence around the budget. The Chief Executive said that at the Governance Committee next month they would be looking at the management accounts and the HR Officer, John Burgess, was working on a revised projection on the staffing side and what it would look like next year. As previously mentioned, the London Assembly Transport Committee had unanimously agreed the London TravelWatch budget bid. This would then go to their Oversight Committee on 16 October before final sign off in February.

The Chair stated he had spoken with a member of the Conservative group on the Transport Committee who had acknowledged that there had been a lot of good work done by London TravelWatch in the last year. He remarked that it was a recognition that things were changing and signs were good. A member said that the organisation would have to demonstrate the extra value they were providing the Committee after they had invested good faith in them over the past year. The Chief Executive said that one thing that had landed well with them was the proposal for London TravelWatch to get greater access to the National Rail Passenger Survey and being able to tailor questions to London passengers.

The Chief Executive said that there had been improvement to the working relationship between staff at London TravelWatch and those at the Assembly. Susan James, the Casework Manager, had met with the support staff for the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups and was starting to assist with casework coming from Assembly Members. One member in particular, Caroline Pidgeon, on her own generated 22% of the overall transport casework from the Assembly. She added that the Director, Policy and Investigation and his team had met with the scrutiny officers at the GLA and were helping to shape the agenda of the Transport Committee going forward.

The Chief Executive said that they would soon begin the recruitment process to appoint a new director who would be reporting into Anthony Smith when he took over as Chief Executive in the new year. She said that they would begin advertising at the end of the month and hopefully have someone recruited by December. The appointment would need the approval of the GLA and it was proposed that either the Chair or Deputy Chair be part of the recruitment panel. The job would be advertised at a spot salary of £70,000 and would be reviewed after one year.

The Chief Executive directed members to the draft text which had been based on Janet Cooke's old job description. Jackie Ballard had written to say that there should be more focus on fostering and deepening the value of the partnership with Transport Focus. It would also be beneficial to pursue a stronger relationship with the GLA

Transport Committee. The Chair had made a point that having experience of working with a board would be desirable.

A member said that it was important to get the language right when putting out a job advert for the role, and that it should focus on increasing the influence of the organisation. She added that although they would want the individual to aim to get the most from the partnership with Transport Focus, they must also be a distinct focal point for passengers in London. It would also be beneficial if the person had the ability to create partnerships with other organisations to ensure that London TravelWatch was maximising its influence. Another member said that point 6 should be about delivering a business plan rather than just producing one.

Another member suggested that the person should demonstrate that they were a team player and had experience of effectively pulling people together. The Chair agreed about the aim of working with other groups and suggested that the person take advantage of the opportunities to undertake research with other partners. The Chief Executive said that she would take on their feedback and come back to them with a new version of the document.

#### **ACTION: Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive said that the GLA used a recruiting company BAME to assist them in the procurement process and there was the possibility of London TravelWatch having access to them. However, it could take some time for this to be authorised. She suggested that the job be advertised on their networks first and if they struggled to find the right calibre of candidate they could then hopefully use BAME. The Chair suggested that it might make sense to set an interview date first so that either the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee had it fixed in their calendar.

The Chief Executive turned to the meetings that were left for the rest of the year. She said that there were three remaining for 2019: the Governance Committee on 5 November, the Board meeting on 19 November and the Policy Committee on 10 December. The Board meeting in November would be used for Board development and to assign transport champion roles to members, and the Policy Committee would be held in public with external guest speakers.

The Chief Executive stated that for next year it was proposed that there would be six Board meetings including a joint event in July to celebrate the new partnership with Transport Focus as well as one away day. She asked members if they would be available on the dates as set out in her report, and noted that there was some difficulty with the 14 April meeting. Members suggested that instead the date for that meeting be changed to 23 April.

The Chief Executive concluded by saying that the Chair had requested that staff were given the time between Christmas and New Year off, when the office was closed, without having to take it as annual leave in recognition of their professionalism during a trying year. The Board agreed. The Chair commented that he also wanted to thank the Chief Executive for her work in producing a strong budget bid and business plan which had allowed the meeting with the Transport Committee to go as smoothly as it had. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for his comments.

## 2 **Transport User Priorities (LTW608)**

The Policy Officer (SH) said that every four years London TravelWatch produced a leaflet which sets out the key priorities that it would like to see the Mayoral candidates deliver on for passengers in London. These principles were evidence based and although updated each mayoral cycle, had similar values to what London TravelWatch had been campaigning for passengers over many years. She stated that they had produced a leaflet, poster and report which set out the justification for the policies. The Policy Officer (SH) commented that although the work was primarily done to influence the Mayor's Transport Strategy the documentation from it was then used regularly, particularly when meeting with external stakeholders as it neatly summarised the work of London TravelWatch.

The Policy Officer (TR) stated that members' feedback on the material they had produced would be welcome to ensure that it was clear what the organisation was trying to achieve from the principles. A member commented that he had some comments on the language, particularly around the accessibility section though said he would put them in an email. He added that there were instances where figures were quoted in the text and suggested that these would be better presented graphically so that they stood out to the reader. Another member commented that more should be made about Hail and Ride and about extending Oyster to Stansted Airport.

Another member commented that there should be some emphasis around engaging with new technologies and how that might change over the four year mayoral term. Another member said that they had not covered people that are excluded from using modern technology or are not technology savvy. On a related point, he remarked that the report talked about making sure that provision of information was delivered in an accurate and timely manner across all modes though not all forms of media.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that there was a danger with TfL reducing its resources and prioritising digital communication over that of traditional communication, such as posters, of a significant amount of people being left behind. He added that in times when the digital method failed for whatever reason it was useful to have a backup so passengers still received some form of communication. The Chair suggested that digital posters were a good and dynamic means of getting a message out to passengers and could be turned around at short notice.

A member commented that there would be an ongoing debate around HS2 and whether it will terminate at Euston. She also suggested that the priorities could be communicated in short videos and posted on social media to coincide with when press releases were sent out.

The Chair said that there was a great amount of work in the report though suggested that the wording could be bolder. He added that he wondered how the organisation could measure the success of achieving some of the priorities as they encompassed some very broad areas. He suggested that the report could be tighter on wording in order to make the priorities easier to target. A member commented that it was important to understand which passengers they were targeting in the priorities as people commuting would have a vastly different experience to those travelling for leisure.

It was noted that a dissemination plan would be needed for this information and that it was planned to be presented as an information pack for Mayoral candidates and their teams. Some discussion took place about the need to highlight specific points to individual candidates depending on their interests.

**Action: Communications Manager in conjunction with the policy team**

**3 Hail and Ride (LTW609)**

The Policy Officer (TR) said that most buses in London operate with fixed bus stops but there was a significant minority that did not. These routes, known as Hail and Ride, allowed passengers to flag down a bus at any point on the route. The driver will usually stop if it is safe to do so, and in some cases when it is not. He commented that Hail and Ride generally tended to reside in outer London boroughs, in particular Bexley, Enfield and Sutton. The buses were very popular with passengers that use them and consider them a door-to-door service. However, London TravelWatch has long advocated for fixed bus stops to replace Hail and Ride so that services were accessible to all passengers.

The Policy Officer (TR) said that for people not used to using Hail and Ride the experience can be confusing and there was a general lack of awareness about them even among people living very close to route of the buses. London TravelWatch officers had sought legal opinion on the issue and received advice stating that Hail and Ride was potentially in breach of the 2010 Equalities Act. He said that TfL had made it a priority to upgrade all Hail and Ride routes to fixed stops, though this required negotiation with local authorities who would need to install the raised kerbs and paint the yellow lines on the road.

The Policy Officer (TR) said that the Policy team had been out to interview passengers on a Hail and Ride route and those that lived close by. They had also spoken to bus drivers who had given their observations on issues such as passengers persistently ringing the bell to stop and people waiting at unsafe locations to be picked up. The Director, Policy and Investigation said that the origin of many of the routes came from when minibuses were introduced in the 1980s and 1990s, which were used to gauge demand in those areas. He added that although much of the objection to fixed stops was around the removal of parking spaces this could be resolved if a controlled parking zone was put in place with specified bays. However, it was noted these could be extremely controversial locally.

The Chief Executive asked if the driver would not stop to pick people up if they were standing at an unsafe place. The Policy Officer (TR) said that the driver would generally direct people to somewhere further down the road where it was safe to stop. The Senior Policy Officer added that there were many instances where drivers would stop in unsafe places. A member agreed as it was often where people wanted to get on, such as on the corner of a road.

The Policy Officer (TR) said that the next step was to present the research to the boroughs to try and encourage them to convert Hail and Ride to fixed stops, particularly where there were fewer obstacles to doing so. There were also working with TfL and the RNIB to make sure the issue remained high on the agenda. The Chief Executive suggested that, as with their work on clearing street clutter, they could highlight progress in specific boroughs which would help determine which ones to

target. A member stated that the organisation should be careful with using the legal advice it had received as although boroughs may be in breach of the Equalities Act it would be difficult to prove. She said it would make more sense to use it as a method of persuading the boroughs to act rather using it to threaten action that might not be won.

The Senior Policy Officer said that work on increasing the number of accessible bus stops had been conducted by London TravelWatch over many years, which as a result had seen the proportion rise to over 95%. London TravelWatch wants to get the remaining 5% converted to fixed stops. He added that the organisation had also managed to get Hail and Ride into the current Mayor's Transport Strategy. The Chair said that it would be helpful if the historical context behind the current work on Hail and Ride was included in the report. A member suggested that a map showing where the routes were would also be useful.

It was agreed that a targeted plan was need for the launch and dissemination of this work.

**Action: Communications Manager in conjunction with the policy team**

#### **4 Any other business**

There was no other business to discuss.

#### **5 Minutes and declarations of interest**

The confidential minutes of the meeting of 9 July 2019 were agreed by the Board and signed by the Chair as a correct record. There were no additional declarations of interest.