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## Confidential Minutes

Agenda item: 17  
Drafted: 14.05.13

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### **Confidential minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7 May 2013 at Dexter House.**

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.

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#### **Present**

##### Members

Josephine Channer, Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke (Chair), Abdikafi Rage, John Stewart, Ruth Thompson

Geoff Hobbs                                      Head of Planning at London Rail (Item 2)

Tim Bellenger                                  Director, Policy and Investigation  
Janet Cooke                                    Chief Executive  
Richard Freeston-Clough                  Communications Officer  
Sharon Malley                                 Executive Assistant (minutes)

#### **1 Confidential minutes of the meeting on 19 March 2013**

The confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on 19 March 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record. It was noted that the research on passenger purchase and sales experiences should be ready for publication shortly.

#### **2 Rail devolution and the impact on London**

Geoff Hobbs, Head of Planning at London Rail, gave a presentation in support of further devolution of the rail network to the Mayor of London. He said that London Rail was particularly interested in suburban lines that were not commercially significant but which were used by large numbers of people to get to work. It was important these services were not overlooked.

He said that there were variations in quality across the network and so London Rail had focused on areas with low customer satisfaction scores where it thought it could

make improvements. These were the West Anglia part of the Greater Anglia franchise and Southeastern local suburban services.

The Greater Anglia network served a variety of functions, being inter-city between London and Norwich, a rural railway in Norfolk, an airport express service, a mid-distance commuter railway to places such as Colchester and a local commuter service for people closer to London. Mr Hobbs said that it would be better for London Rail to take on the macro-economic risks associated with the inner suburban railway, leaving the operator to concentrate on quality. Devolution would improve quality but there would be a small increase in costs. This would be funded by operators taking on less risk, an increase in passenger numbers and a reduction in levels of fare evasion.

Mr Hobbs said a lot of discussion with the Department for Transport had already taken place and a decision on whether to go ahead with devolution was now awaited.

Hertfordshire County Council had expressed support for devolution in relation to the stations in its area (Cheshunt and Theobalds Grove) but Kent County Council was opposed. One of the main obstacles was resolving the 'out-boundary' issues, with Kent concerned about potential impact on paths into London for longer-distance services, potential increases in fares for longer-distance commuters and the threat to the viability of the longer-distance franchises should the local elements be removed. London Rail would offer safeguards in respect of all of these concerns but Kent County Council remained sceptical.

The other main concern related to accountability and the difficulty for non-London residents to hold the Mayor to account in the event of problems with their devolved services. London Rail was considering options to address this relating to the governance of the devolved services.

Much of the opposition to the devolution proposals was coming from the east of Kent, with some politicians in that area being vocal in their views. Any support London TravelWatch could offer to assist here would be welcome.

It was noted that the Department for Transport would be issuing a request for proposal for West Anglia in June and it was important that devolution was included as an option within that document. The request for proposal for Southeastern was due in Autumn 2013. In the event of a positive decision, London Rail would hope to begin to take over services from Summer 2015.

The Chief Executive said it was important to begin pinning down some of the implications for passengers of rail devolution. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said it would be important to retain the option of point to point season tickets as the alternative option of travelcards could prove more expensive for some passengers. Mr Hobbs agreed to set out in writing the agreement to maintain point to point season tickets.

The Chair thanked Mr Hobbs for attending and noted London TravelWatch's resounding support for devolution, as evidenced in his recent letters to the Secretary of State, the Mayor and the Greater London Authority.

Members noted that if devolution were to proceed, in whole or in part, there would be a number of consumer priorities that should be taken on board by TfL and London TravelWatch should play an active part in this process.

### **3 Meeting review**

Risk issues: Members noted that their current views in relation to the Roads Task Force differed somewhat from those of the previous Deputy Chair and it would be important to maintain the distinction between his views and their own. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would write to Mike Keegan thanking him for the presentation and seeking the opportunity to discuss the engagement strategy following the publication of the Task Force's report in July.

**Action: Policy Officer**

It was also agreed that London TravelWatch would write to Geoff Hobbs to reiterate the desire to continue working together in the future, in the interests of the travelling public in London.

**Action: Director, Policy and Investigation**

Media: No specific issues for publicity were raised in the meeting.