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**Minutes**

Agenda item: 4  
Drafted: 30.11.11

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**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 29 November 2011 at  
6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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**Present**

Members

David Barry (Chair), Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant, Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (Deputy Chair)

Guests

Simon Feast	Fares & Passenger Benefits Manager, Department for Transport (DfT)
Lucy Preston	Ticketing Policy Manager, Transport for London (TfL)
Serena Allen	Ticketing Services Manager, TfL
Carolyn Agocs	Communications Manager, TfL
Wilco Chappels	Pricing Manager, Association of Train Operating Companies

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive (Items 1-8)
Bryan Davey	Director, Public Liaison
Karl Grewer	Casework Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)

## **Minutes**

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

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and made the standard housekeeping and safety announcements.

### **2 Apologies for absence**

No apologies from members were received.

### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no additional declarations of interest.

### **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the Consumer Affairs committee held on 20 September 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to a correction on p4 where Southwestern should be amended to read South West Trains.

It was noted that paragraph 5.4 referred to the planning condition that apparently required a travelator between the two Stratford stations. A London TravelWatch officer had suggested prior to the meeting that the planning condition in fact referred to a mechanical link, not specifically a travelator, and that the Docklands Light Railway could qualify as a mechanical link.

It was agreed that this would be confirmed before being removed from the Matters Arising report.

**Action: Director, Policy & Investigation**

### **5 Matters arising (CAC021)**

#### **5.1 Production of posters showing possible taxi fares at selected locations**

The Director, Policy & Investigation, reported that the Law Commission had approached London TravelWatch in relation to its investigation into the reform of taxi and private hire licensing. The research would cover fare information as well as a range of other issues. It was agreed that the Director, Policy & Investigation, would provide information on this to the Chair.

## **5.2 Complaint handling at TfL**

The Chief Executive reported that Transport for London was undergoing a period of considerable change, including complaint handling. It was hoped that Shashi Verma, who would be leading on this issue following the restructure, would attend the next London TravelWatch Board meeting to explain how complaints and corporate support would be handled in future.

## **5.3 How to Complain leaflet**

It was agreed that the text of the How to Complain leaflet should be added to the website as plain hypertext rather than a pdf document.

**Action: Communications Officer**

## **5.4 Lost property details on London buses posters**

The Director, Public Liaison, reported that the procedures for handling lost property on London Buses was changing and there should soon be a central number for lost property enquiries. Once this came into force it should be easier to for passengers to find lost property. Members welcomed this proposed change.

## **5.5 Online issuing of train tickets**

It was noted that the Passenger Focus report on ticketing that was circulated previously to members did not address the issue of particular concern, namely that there was no agreed system of redress for passengers who experienced difficulties with purchasing tickets on line and subsequently collecting them at stations. This issue should be kept under review.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

## **5.6 GLA consultation on revisions to TfL penalty fares**

It was noted that London TravelWatch had not yet received a letter from the Mayor of London in response to its comments about proposed changes to the level of TfL penalty fares. Lucy Preston of TfL reported that it was not yet finalised whether the changes to penalty fare levels would in fact go ahead.

Simon Feast of the DfT highlighted that penalty fare regulation was currently open to consultation via the “red tape challenge” website, on which individuals and organisations were able to suggest revisions to existing regulations. He added that the DfT was still progressing possible changes to the National Rail penalty fare levels, to bring them into line with current TfL levels, but that it was a lengthy process. In addition, the National Rail Conditions of Carriage were on the red tape challenge for consultation.

The Chief Executive confirmed that London TravelWatch had responded to the red tape challenge on rail safety, alongside Passenger Focus, putting forward concerns that removal of too much safety regulation would be detrimental to passengers.

## **5.7 London TravelWatch research on incomplete Oyster PAYG journeys**

It was reported that South West Trains now had ticket vending machines with full Oyster functionality and that feedback from South West Trains staff had been very positive.

Lucy Preston commented that work was underway to make it easier for Oyster pay as you go users to get their journey history online, which was due to go live shortly.

## **6 Actions taken (CAC022)**

The Director, Policy & Investigation, reported on his meeting with Abellio, who will be operating the Greater Anglia franchise from February 2012. The Director made a number of suggestions about passenger issues, which he believed would be incorporated by Abellio in Spring.

## **7 London TravelWatch response to ticketing scrutiny (CAC023)**

The Director, Policy & Investigation, said that the London Assembly had recently published a report on ticketing, in particular about new ways of paying for tickets such as 'wave and pay', and presented to members London TravelWatch's evidence to the scrutiny. He reported that he had not been able to view the TfL evidence prior to submitting London TravelWatch's and that if he had it would have influenced his own submission.

It was noted that new technologies always took time to bed in and there would inevitably be teething problems. For example, customers using wave and pay would need to ensure that they did not inadvertently pass two cards over the reader, because they perhaps had two cards next to each other in their wallet, but took one card out and passed it separately over the reader, to avoid being charged on both cards.

It was agreed that there should be one system for redress, in order to minimise confusion for passengers, and that it would be preferable for TfL to handle complaints in the first instance rather than the banks.

It was agreed that it was important to ensure that passengers without bank cards were able to access tickets and Lucy Preston suggested that TfL was considering a card that worked on the wave and pay principle but which it issued rather than the banks. Members agreed that there should not be differential ticket pricing for different wave and pay cards.

Members supported the principles and recommendations set out in the Assembly's report and agreed to keep this issue under general review.

## **8 Casework report and update (CAC024)**

The Director, Public Liaison, presented the casework report for the period July to September 2011. He reported that there had been a small decline in the number of

enquiries being received by London TravelWatch, which was possibly due to the removal of its phone number from the posters on London buses.

It was noted that it would be useful, if possible, for the table showing the numbers of each type of contact (enquiry, initial, appeal etc) could be broken down to show the method of contact, eg telephone, email or letter.

**Action: Casework manager**

It was noted that target one, which required London TravelWatch to acknowledge all newly received appeal cases within five working days, often related to the automatic reply sent to incoming emails rather than the individual follow-up acknowledgement made by case officers. It would be worthwhile to consider whether targets needed amending to reflect this, and whether the targets as a whole should be reviewed in light of the current high performance. It was agreed that this would be considered as part of the 2013 work plan.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

The Chief Executive said that it would be helpful to focus on qualitative issues in future, such as the quality of responses and the ability to link casework to policy work, rather than quantitative calculations such as length of time to provide a response.

## **9 Stakeholder questionnaire report and update (CAC025)**

The Director, Public Liaison, presented the stakeholder questionnaire report for the period April to September 2011.

Members noted that the feedback from stakeholders was very positive and congratulated staff for their excellent performance.

It was noted that the ethnicity of London TravelWatch complainants did not reflect the diversity of London's transport users and this might be an area of work for the Governance Committee to consider in future.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

## **10 Any other business**

It was noted that the Government had announced changes to the levels of fares that would potentially result in smaller increases to the levels of fares for 2012 that had already been announced by the London Mayor.

## **11 Resolution to move into confidential session**

The meeting resolved, under section 15(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the next following item/s, that it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded from the meeting.

In confidential session, members considered preliminary findings of research on Underground ticket office closures and complains handling procedures at London Buses and reviewed the meeting.