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**Executive Minutes**

Agenda item : 5 (b)

Author: Janet Cooke

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**Minutes of the London TravelWatch Executive Group meeting  
held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 22 January 2009**

Present

Sharon Grant (SG)	Chair
Lorna Reith (LR)	Deputy Chair
Gail Engert (GE)	
David Leibling (DL)	
Sarah Pond (SP)	
Janet Cooke (JaC)	Chief Executive
Peter Ellis (PE)	Senior Finance Officer (minutes 5 and 6)
Patti Tobin (PT)	Director, Finance & Personnel
Amy Cadney (AC)	Chief Executive/Chair's PA (temporary) – Note taker

**1 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies.

**2 Revised minutes of meeting held on 13 November 2008**

The minutes of this meeting were agreed.

**3 Draft minutes of meeting held on 11 December 2008**

After discussion the minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

DL mentioned that the members had not been notified of the new Executive Group meeting dates and had not received an update regarding staff's job descriptions, as discussed in the last meeting, to which JaC advised that this was covered in the Chief Executive's report. It was noted that the updated Risk register was still needed to be brought back to the Executive.

JaC

**4 Matters arising**

Members expressed concern about the delay in receiving the papers for this meeting. JaC apologised for this delay which was due to the abnormally high level of work. After

discussion it was agreed that the future aim should be that papers be sent both by post and electronically the weekend before a meeting. It was noted that the monthly finance report would continue to be distributed two days before the meeting. JaC advised that, on this basis, meeting dates for February and March could remain the same.

## **5 Finance Report – December 2008**

DL expressed concern over the amount forecast to be spent over the next Quarter, in contrast to the amount spent over the last 3 quarters of the year, which was considerably less. JaC reminded members that slippage in delivery of the business plan meant that expenditure on many items would not be incurred until the final quarter.

It was noted that a new line had been added into the management accounts so that all expenditure relating to the Chief Executive's Review could be grouped under one heading, thus making it more transparent.

In respect of IT, there was some discussion over future computer replacement, as outlined in the Capital Expenditure section of the report, and JaC advised that although provision had been made in the budget to upgrade the complaints monitoring software, this might not in practice be procured until very early in 09/10, following the casework review.

LR referred to the entry regarding the risk arising from the overdue rent review and agreed that it was prudent to make provision for this and important to itemise these things so we were not penalised.

DL requested that an extra column be added to the accounts so it was easier to identify unspent budget areas.

**PE**

JaC reiterated that the accounts were not sent to the GLA until the Board had reviewed them.

## **6 Reserves Policy**

PE presented his report which set out initial thoughts as to what might be covered in a reserves policy and advised the group that he believed the current reserves were not excessive.

During the subsequent discussion it was suggested that reserves ought to be sufficient to cover three months salaries to meet any potential liabilities, although others thought London TravelWatch's position was different to that of the voluntary sector since there was a statutory requirement of funding. It was agreed that further research be done into what was considered best practice for similar organisations, and a further report be brought back to the Executive.

**PE**

## **7 Chair's update**

SG updated the members that she had been invited to attend the Transport Select Committee with Tim Bellenger, to give evidence to their enquiry into rail fares and franchises.

She also asked for views on the proposal to give the British Transport Police additional powers to search passengers suspected of carrying knives. Members were unanimously against this and agreed that this should be raised with the Board.

JaC

## **8 Chief Executive's report**

JaC congratulated PT, the Director, Public Liaison and their project teams for their team work during the recent restructure/office move, especially at the height of absences, and pointed out that the move round had itself provided a master class in flexible working and group problem solving.

On this point, DL asked if the Chair/CEO could formally thank everyone for their hard work to which SG advised that she would circulate an email by the end of the week.

SG

In respect of serious staff shortages, LR agreed that it was good that we were using temporary staff, but agreed there was a need to look at the long term sickness issues.

JaC said that an intruder had been found in the building recently and that a warning would be circulated to all members and staff in respect of this, to which everyone agreed. Noting that the Chief Executive had been called out before Christmas when the alarm was activated. LR suggested outsourcing the call-out function to save directors having to travel in during evenings/weekends.

SG said that the proposal to try and commission a survey of passenger views was good news and asked to be updated with developments. JaC explained that this was a scoping exercise and she would be meeting with potential consultants to discuss this.

## **9 Board Issues**

### **9.1 Proposed Board structure with effect from 1 April 2009**

The group discussed draft proposals to restructure the work of the Board and its subsidiaries from April, including a reduction in the number of Board meetings, the establishment of a new Transport Services Committee, and expanding the remit of the Casework and Transport Accessibility Committees. They agreed that the present task forces should be wound up and their work incorporated into the main committees. Rather than establish another task force to monitor progress on major projects they suggested lead members be appointed for each of these. It was agreed that LR should chair the new committee with DL a Vice Chair and that GE would take over as Chair of the Transport Accessibility Committee.

It was noted that the suggested dates for meetings needed to be checked before wider circulation, and any amendments should try and take into account diary clashes with Executive members.

JaC

### **9.2 Board allowances**

After wide discussion, it was agreed to proceed on the basis that Board members are paid for two days work per month except for the members of the Executive Group, who would continue to be paid four days per month to reflect their wider responsibilities (the number of

days for the Chair and Deputy Chair were fixed by the London Assembly at two and a half days per week and six days per month respectively).

JaC confirmed that this reflected the current position and that it had been made clear to new members that two days per month was expected.

SG noted that the position could be reviewed at the end of year appraisals if any member felt they were having to do extra work.

### 9.3 Board training

Members discussed the forthcoming Induction Day for new Members, the “Riding the Rails” transport familiarisation day and the Board Awayday. They agreed the draft programmes for these events, noting that further planning was still needed for the Awayday.

JaC said she was currently investigating external facilitators and guest speakers.

## 10 Stakeholder Relations

The Executive Group discussed stakeholder relations and agreed to general proposals as to how further work should be progressed on these. Specifically:

- I. Passenger Focus – further work be put in hand that would lead to the development of a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations. JaC
- II. Detailed work was needed to develop a more appropriate relationship with TfL, also to be agreed in a memorandum of understanding. JaC
- III. The Deputy Chair would lead a review of member level borough and local liaison work. LR

It was also noted that stakeholder relations would be discussed further at the forthcoming Board Awayday.

JaC

## 11 Draft Six Monthly Performance Report to GLA

JaC distributed the tabled draft report and advised that she would send the final version electronically.

## 12 Any other business

There were no further issues to discuss.