
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item 8
FT22
Drafted 16.4.09

Action taken

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To advise members of matters dealt with by the Chairman, Deputy Chair, the Chief Executive and/or the secretariat since the last meeting.

2 Information

- 2.1 London Overground Fares meeting

On 23 January 2009 the Director, Research and Development, met with TfL to discuss London Overground Fares issues. A full note of the meeting is attached for information at Annex A.

3 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 3.1 In accordance with London TravelWatch's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislation, account is taken when responding to consultations on proposals from external bodies of their particular impact (if any) on the needs of people whose access to transport may be restricted by reason of disability or social exclusion.

4 Legal powers

- 4.1 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 the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 No specific financial implications for London TravelWatch arise from this report.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the report is received for information.

Annex A

Note of a meeting held on 23 January 2009 at London TravelWatch Offices

Attendees :

Tim Bellenger

Peter Legg, TfL Fares and Ticketing

Harold Godwin, TfL Fares and Ticketing

London Overground Fares

Peter Legg began by outlining the transition that occurred between Silverlink finishing their franchise and the London Overground concession starting. Silverlink had been required to facilitate the changes that TfL wanted to occur at the January 2008 fares round on National Rail, they had been generally co-operative but had no incentives as such to do the work. There were also a number of issues related to last minute changes required by London Midland, and the result was that a number of things that TfL wanted to do, did not get done. TfL were also bound by the Mayor's commitment not to raise fares. London Overground Fares and Ticketing arrangements are therefore still at an 'interim' stage as far as where TfL wish to take them.

TfL are therefore proposing to have two changes to Fares and Tickets on London Overground to overcome some of the problems they have inherited from Silverlink.

February 2008 (date to be fixed and subject to ATOC agreement as it is an out of course change):-

- Some change to Oyster PAYG fares local to the Watford Area (£1.50 reduced to £1)
- Reintroduction of Cheap Day Returns from Richmond to North London Line stations (this is to solve the St.Margarets anomaly that came through casework).
- Cheap Day Returns on the North London Line were meant to have been abolished at January 2008 (because Oyster PAYG is TfL's version of a Cheap Day Return) have continued to be available. However, in this change most of them will be abolished for journeys internal to London Overground, except where there are issues to do with other National Rail stations being in the same cluster as London Overground (e.g. Richmond issue above, Watford Junction (stations to the North), West Hampstead stations).
- There will be a number of corrections to cash fares – where a decrease had occurred in January this will go back up to the correct cash fare, and where the fare had been wrongly increased this will go back down to the correct cash fare. Most of these flows have very low passenger numbers, and where passengers have been overcharged a full refund will be given.
- First Class fares will be reintroduced for journeys where parallel London Midland and Southern services operate with this facility e.g. Bushey – London Euston, Harrow and Wealdstone – West Brompton.

May 2008 (at normal change date):-

- New cluster arrangements on National Rail to get around the Cheap Day Return problem identified above.
- Review of chargeable routes for Oyster PAYG e.g. Richmond – Stratford currently assumed to be via zone 1 is likely to become assumed not via zone 1. There are also likely to be 2 different fares depending on the route.

- National Railcard discounts loaded onto Oyster – there will be an easement from Watford Junction to Carpenders Park allowing off-peak travel on the 0921 ex Watford to be capped.

There are a number of observations on the above proposals:-

- Oyster PAYG take up has already been much higher than TfL anticipated at this stage.
- Revenue on the concession is also much higher than TfL had anticipated – this may be due to a number of factors such as the higher level of staff presence, the introduction of new Ticket Vending Machines at stations previously without them, some new ticket gates or that the high level of publicity surrounding the Overground launch has attracted passengers to the service who were previously unaware of its existence.
- There have been considerable problems with the Ticket Vending Machines and some Booking Office machines inherited from Silverlink, particularly 'FAS-TIS' where they have been unable to adapt it so far to issue Oyster based tickets. Travelcards from Carpenders Park, Bushey and Watford High Street which should be issued on Oyster as zone 789 validity are therefore still being issued as station specific on paper, but with instructions to Met line staff to accept them at the relevant stations in zones 789 if presented at a barrier line. ATOC still has not been able to solve the problem of selling Travelcards covering zones 789 and 10 from National Rail stations (casework from sometime ago for Purley to Amersham).
- The proposed introduction of a TVM with Oyster capability at Clapham Junction has still not happened because of the opposition from South West Trains, as a result the local newsagent has now become the highest Oyster selling agent on the TfL network – which he is obviously very pleased about! (Presumably selling substantial amounts of Travelcards as well as PAYG, at the expense of tickets sold through the TOC).
- There are still some gaps in the agent network for Oyster – which they are trying to close.
- (It seems to me that TfL are regarding London Overground as a testing ground for a number of bits of Oyster functionality to see if they work – and the numbers of people affected are likely to be very small if it goes wrong).

Peter Legg has advised us that we should not rely on NFM98 London as being an accurate, and if the Casework team have any queries they should contact him direct, rather than relying on this publication.

On a separate issue Peter believed that Oyster PAYG acceptance on First Great Western at London Paddington would for journeys from Ealing Broadway and Greenford would be implemented fairly shortly, and it may be possible to advance implementation at intermediate stations to Greenford and West Drayton sooner than previously anticipated. I commented on the recent announcement from FGW on their fares debacle, and that I had suggested we ask them as a 'passenger benefit' to promote Oyster PAYG at Ealing Broadway more intensively than perhaps they would have done, given that the FGW announcement does not cover London area fares.

[end]