
Report of meeting from external body

Author : Carmel Cannon

Information Item (a)
LTW 295
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Harrow Council Bus and Highway transport liaison meeting

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To record for information the proceedings of a meeting of an external body attended by a representative of London TravelWatch.

2 Information

- 2.1 The minutes of a meeting of the Harrow Council Bus and Highway Transport Liaison meeting held on 7 January 2009 are attached as Annex A. David Leibling represented London TravelWatch at this meeting.
- 2.2 The minutes were prepared by Harrow Council and London TravelWatch has no responsibility for their content or format.

3 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 3.1 Not applicable – report is for information only.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 Not applicable – report is for information only

5 Legal powers

- 5.1 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).

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the report is received for information.

Harrow Council

Minutes of the Bus & Highway Liaison Meeting

Wednesday 7th January 2009

Present

Harrow Public Transport Users Association (HPTUA)

Anthony Wood AW Chairman

Harrow Council

Jerry Miles JM Councillor
John Nickolay JN Councillor
Susan Hall SH Councillor
Mrinal Choudhury MC Councillor
Manji Kara MK Councillor
Hanif Islam HI Transport Planner
Ian Pearce IP Crime Reduction Unit
Helen Ennis HE Minutes

Harrow Primary Care Trust

Anne Whitehead AW

Bus Operators

Paresh Soneji PS Arriva the Shires
Paul Giles PG London Sovereign
Sean O'Shea SO Metroline

Transport for London (TfL)

Oliver Birtill OB Surface Transport

Metropolitan Police

Lisa Cook LC Safer Transport Unit
Paul Evans PE Safer Transport Unit

London Travelwatch

David Leibling DL

ACTION

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman (Anthony Wood) welcomed all.

A vote of thanks was given for Martin Fisher, who previously attended as a representative for Metroline, for his contribution to the group.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Dave West - London Buses, TfL
- Richard Shirley - Surface Transport, TfL

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 1ST OCTOBER 2008

Page 1 - MC's apology for absence was omitted from the minutes.
Minutes agreed.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE ITEMS

a) Harrow Weald Garage

In relation to the proposed extending or rebuilding to accommodate an extended bus garage, SO advised that in the current climate expenditure is a limitation and therefore Metroline have decided not to proceed with the extension plans. SO also advised that he was not aware of any issues relating to the congestion of buses who park on the High Road.

b) Bus Stop and Bus Stands Issues

HI advised that the road markings on College Road and South Hill Avenue in South Harrow have now been implemented.

c) Petts Hill

HI advised that the bridge was successfully installed over the Christmas period, as planned. Both lanes of the road are due to be reopened at 4pm today (07/01/2009). The remains of the old bridge supports will now be removed and the bridge contractors are expected to complete their part of the work by May 2009.

Highway works are proposed to start in March 2009, at the earliest, with the full scheme being completed in early Autumn 2009.

DL asked what the clearance is on the new bridge. JN advised that the bridge height would be inline with other new bridges. *[Post meeting note: HI confirmed that clearance is 5.1m in place of the previous 4.5m].*

SO and PG reported that they had incurred some delays on their routes due to the bridge works.

d) CCTV Issues

None.

e) Wealdstone High Street

All open and signage displayed.

f) Harrow Town Centre – Access Strategy

With regard to two-way buses on Station Road SH reported that TfL will not provide any further funding for the scheme so funding needs to be secured from elsewhere. The scheme is currently too expensive for the Council to finance and justify with so many other locations in the borough needing attention. *[Post meeting note: scheme costs have come down following further review. Meeting with TfL in February 2009 to discuss but generally looking more*

positive].

g) Future Major Developments Impacting on Public Transport

SH advised of a development by Berkeley Homes on Honeypot Lane, near to the junction with Whitchurch Lane. SH to obtain update on progress of development.

SH

h) Other Highway Issues

Problems have been identified for route H11 in Suffolk Road (western end) due to parked vehicles. DL suggested the traffic island be removed to provide more space for the bus. SH advised that yellow lines are preferable due to their low cost and ease of implementation.

SH

Roxeth Hill – In response to a previous issue raised relating to signage on Roxeth Hill, HI advised that the two-way signs are no longer required and will be removed shortly.

DL requested yellow lines on the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue at the junction with Whitmore Road.

SH

5. BUS SERVICE ISSUES

Sovereign Bus Strike

AW mentioned the recent strike by Sovereign buses and was disappointed at the lack of warning to passengers. AW feels passengers should have at least 7 days notice of any strike, so that they can at least be aware even if the strike does not go ahead. AW recognised that posters were displayed at the bus stops but not until a couple of days before the strike. Some passengers only use certain bus routes Monday to Friday so advance warning is crucial. AW also suggested notices be displayed on the actual bus. OB agreed to feed back comments.

OB

Route 302

OB advised that Route 302 would shortly be converted to a double deck service.

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes

OB also reported that motorcycles will be allowed to use bus lanes from 5th January 2009. The 18-month trial will allow motorcycles, mopeds, scooters and tricycles - but not those with sidecars - to travel in most red route bus lanes. Drivers of these vehicles will be able to use red route bus lanes currently used by cyclists and taxi drivers during operational hours. The rationale behind the decision was discussed at the meeting with safety and traffic flow being highlighted as the main justifications.

As the legislation only currently applies to red routes, SH advised that there are no red routes in the borough and therefore Harrow Council plan to wait for the results of the trial before allowing such vehicles in Harrow bus lanes. SO, PG and PS all agree that their companies are not inclined to support any vehicle using the bus lane except buses, otherwise it reduces their purpose. More information on the trial can be found on the TfL website: www.tfl.gov.uk.

3G Plans for Rotue 182

AW advised that a site meeting was held outside Northwick Park hospital to agree the proposed location of the bus stop. OB advised that this proposal is progressing as planned and agreed to update AW.

OB

HI added that a meeting is currently being organised between Harrow, Barnet, Brent, members, TfL and 3G staff to look at the 182 proposals on the entire route, which were compiled by consultants. HI to provide an update on progress at the next meeting. Station Road will also be considered as it forms part of the 182 route.

HI

Bus Stopping Arrangements

AW requested an update on bus stopping arrangements following the consultation undertaken. OB advised that drivers are now instructed to stop regardless of whether the bell has been pressed and the type of bus flag displayed. OB added that bus flags displaying 'Request Stop' would not be changed unless being replaced. MC mentioned confusion amongst passengers when waiting for the 223 buses. OB to investigate.

OB

Harrow Bus Station

AW advised that a site meeting had been held to identify problems and possible improvements. PE reported that the visibility of officers has helped but feels the design of the bus station should be improved to reduce/diffuse noise levels. AW reported it had been suggested that the notice boards be moved against the wall to improve the flow of passengers through the bus station. The site visit concluded that there were no serious problems with the bus station just boisterous behaviour from youths.

It was suggested to move the bus controller into the location of the bus station shop to be more visible to passengers. AWh stated that some consideration should be given to the youths who want somewhere to meet their friends. AW commented that overall Harrow has a good bus station with only 2% of passengers posing a problem and the other 98% should not be inconvenienced because of them.

AWh mentioned problems with people queuing for buses. AW agreed that there is a capacity issue. OB advised that TfL has a School Citizenship Team who visit schools to educate young people how to behave in and around public transport. OB to provide further information on the School Citizenship Team to LC.

OB

IP advised that TfL's Crime Reduction Manager would be attending future Bus & Highway Liaison meetings. IP is keen to see the CCTV at Harrow on the Hill tube station to be linked upto the bus station cameras and is working with TfL to progress this project. AW added that the group support these proposals.

IP informed the meeting that facial recognition cameras are not in use at Harrow Bus Station but agreed to investigate any future

IP

proposals.

AW advised that the site meeting concluded to discuss ideas and improvements at this and the April liaison meeting and then decide on how to progress.

6. FUTURE CONTRACT/ROUTE CHANGES

OB explained that TfL are currently in the process of consulting on bus routes H12, 83, 114, 140, 182, 183, 340 and 640 and advised that stakeholders should have received a letter in mid December explaining the proposals. Any routes within Harrow that are not mentioned will operate with no changes.

Routes 398 and 395

The consultation also includes the proposal to reroute the 398 bus to Wood End Estate with a new bus route, route 395, created to run from Westway Cross Retail Park in Greenford to Harrow Town Centre via Northolt and South Harrow. Map of proposed routes 398 and 395 tabled at meeting. OB requested comments and asked to be informed of anyone else that should be consulted.

In relation to the new route proposed (no. 395) AW is satisfied with the southern end of the service but feels that the service at the north end would be better utilised via Shaftesbury Circle while also avoiding the congestion on Lower Road, which is already served adequately by other bus routes.

AW also suggested that route 395 continue from Harrow Town Centre and terminate at Northwick Park Hospital instead. HI added that site visits show there is enough capacity to serve the bus stop on Kymberley Road.

OB agreed to take back all comments.

OB

South Harrow Polyclinic

AW enquired what provisions had been made for the soon to be opened Polyclinic in Alexandra Avenue and suggested route H12 be split into two routes – H12 and H15, which would allow a 20 minute service to the polyclinic. These latter route would connect Pinner to the clinic. OB advised that TfL have looked at expected usage but it is difficult to predict demand before the clinic is officially opened in April 2009. Data collected to date suggests that there wouldn't be enough usage to warrant changing/splitting the route plus the route may become less reliable and be confusing to passengers. SO added that two routes would be more difficult to manage.

AWh expressed concern that more consideration had not been given to services to the Polyclinic. OB advised that TfL's travel planning team will be more involved once the Polyclinic opens. AWh mentioned a questionnaire that will shortly be sent to all patients to gather information on how they get to the Polyclinic. AWh to forward draft questionnaire to OB to ensure the correct information is collected.

AWh

Bus Usage in South Harrow and Rayners Lane

JN mentioned the need to seriously review the bus service between South Harrow and Rayners Lane area as residents, who are opposed to the frequency of double-decked buses, regularly report under used buses on their road and believe the buses are also causing vibrations. AW added that studies have shown poor usage of the H12 bus and feels there would be large acceptance to reduce the service. OB agreed to take comments back.

OB

Route 324

OB announced another new route proposed between Stanmore and Brent Cross. Map of proposed route tabled at meeting. AW expressed his disappointment that route 324 would not serve the orthopaedic hospital and feels that it should serve Queensbury Circle station. OB commented that stopping at Queensbury Circle has not yet been ruled out.

JN suggested the new route turn at the orthopaedic hospital rather than at Stanmore Station as the station is already served by the H12 and bus space is limited at the station. AW also suggested OB obtain the consultation responses received from the original H17 proposals, about 6 years ago.

iBus

OB reported that every bus in Harrow should now have the iBus technology installed and working (with the exception of school buses) and TfL are on course for all buses in London to have iBus by April 2009.

Freedom Pass

OB reported that freedom pass users can now travel at any time within London with their pass, as the hours of restriction have been removed.

Double Decked Buses on HOTH

Complaints had been received by AW concerning overcrowding on route 258 caused by the occasional use of single deck buses.

7. BUS PRIORTIY

HI provided an update.

Cannon Lane/Whittington Way

Scheme has now been implemented.

Common Road, Stanmore

Progress has been delayed due to Hertfordshire County Council carrying out a safety audit. Progress will resume once the audit is done although it will be necessary to reapply for funding next financial year. Part of the delay is also due to other utilities work in the area.

Honeypot Lane Bus Lane (Northbound)

Additional bus lane to be installed shortly.

Pinner Road/Station Road, North Harrow

Scheme to be implemented in February 2009. Work in this area has been co-ordinated to cause minimum disruption.

Rayners Lane/Alexandra Avenue

Waiting restrictions have been installed.

Long Elmes

Two options are currently being considered:

Option 1 – Use the grass verge to create parking bays

Option 2 – Implement yellow lines to create passing places

AW commented that he is keen to see improvements to assist buses and general traffic but not result in reduced resident parking. HI advised that the council have a policy not to remove healthy trees in relation to the installation of traffic schemes and option 1 is proving difficult as a result.

JN requested yellow lines outside the doctor's surgery in Kings Road, Rayners Lane. HI advised that statutory consultation is to be carried out in March 2009.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

OB enquired whether any progress had been made following the site visit held outside Northwick Park Hospital. HI advised that the site meeting confirmed the optimum location for the additional bus stop on Watford Road. A trial bus stop will be used to determine demand, although the Police have raised concern about speed levels on the road.

Following an issue raised by the POP Transport Sub Group, HI asked the procedure for dealing with the curtailment of buses in relation to passengers who use an Oyster card. PG explained that the driver of the curtailed bus should issue a transfer ticket to the driver of the next bus, which lists all of the passengers who have already paid for their journey.

Finally, DL mentioned traffic light issues at George V Avenue and Stanmore Hill. In relation to George V Avenue HI advised that TfL are reviewing Harrow's proposal for the junction, which provides a better layout for right turns. A zebra crossing has already been implemented with positive feedback.

In response to the Stanmore Hill issue, TfL have removed the secondary signal head. Pedestrians complained as it made it harder to cross the road. Harrow will be reviewing this junction in February 2009.

Future Meeting Dates (all at 2pm):

Wednesday 1st April 2009 – Committee Room 5

Wednesday 1st July 2009 – Committee Room 1 & 2

Wednesday 7th October 2009 – Committee Room 1 & 2

Wednesday 6th January 2010 – venue to be confirmed