
Report of meeting from external body

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Information Item (b)
LTW 296
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Harrow Council Rail 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 Rail Transport Liaison meeting held on 7 January 2009 are attached as Annex A. No representatives of London TravelWatch were present but London TravelWatch is mentioned regarding its response to proposed change to the Watford – Gatwick service (para 2 (a)).
- 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 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the report is received for information.

Harrow Council

Minutes of the Rail Liaison Meeting

Wednesday 7th January 2009

Present

Harrow Council

John Nickolay	JN	Councillor
Manji Kara	MK	Councillor
Jerry Miles	JM	Councillor
Mrinal Choudhury	MC	Councillor
Hanif Islam	HI	Transport Planner
Helen Ennis	HE	Minutes

Rail Operators

Diggory Waite	DW	Chiltern Railways
Andrew Morsley	AM	Metropolitan Line, London Underground
Phil Wood	PW	Planning, London Underground
Mike Strzelecki	MS	Safety, London Underground
Ian Rashbrook	IR	Southern Railway

Harrow Public Transport Users Association (HPTUA)

Anthony Wood	AW	Chairman
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ACTION

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (Anthony Wood) welcomed all.

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Susan Hall	Bernie Peal
Yvonne Leslie	Mark Eaton
Angela Back	

a) Minutes of Previous Meeting: 1st October 2008

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

Minutes agreed.

b) Matters Arising

To be dealt with under agenda heads.

2. SOUTHERN

IR provided an update.

a) Watford to Gatwick Service - Update

IR advised that while Southern are no longer running a Watford to Gatwick service, trains are additionally serving East Croydon on the Milton Keynes to Clapham Junction route. Planners have considered options to provide a service further south, but to no avail.

The current timetable will remain in operation until December 2010. If Go-Via retains the Southern contract then the timetable will be reconsidered. Bids are currently being submitted for the route with the four short listed companies being: Go Via, South West Trains (also known as Stagecoach), National Express and NedRailways.

AW advised that HPTUA have been approached by Stagecoach for their comments on the route and have directed Stagecoach to London TravelWatch, whose proposals are fully supported by HPTUA. London TravelWatch suggested a half-hourly service from Watford Junction to Gatwick Airport. AW reported that none of the other shortlisted bidders had approached HPTUA. IR agreed to pass information onto the bid team.

IR

IR confirmed that while the contract ceases in September 2009, a new timetable would not become operational before December 2010.

MC enquired about the ease of interchanging at East Croydon. IR explained that passengers should be able to use the same platform to get their onward train and advised of good facilities for passengers at East Croydon.

HI queried the minimum contractual service. IR explained that the Department for Transport (DfT) state the minimum service expected by Southern is to Clapham Junction. Southern can then serve more stations, as long as their agreed route is met, but is also constrained by Network Rail.

IR reported of works to be carried out by Network Rail at Clapham Junction:

- Platform 15 – to be straightened and train to platform height reduced. Works due to commence in March 2009.
- Platform 17 – works due to commence in 2010.
- Lifts are also proposed.

b) West London Line Service to Westfield Shopping Centre

IR advised that all trains now call at Shepherds Bush despite some initial teething problems when the Westfield Shopping Centre opened in October 2008. Southern have sought approval to terminate at Shepherds Bush as opposed to Olympia, as the

timetable states, and it is Southern's aspirations to run more frequent trains on this route. *[Post Meeting Note: In response to the suggestion that it would be better if the 3rd rail / overhead power supply changeover could take place in a station in order to avoid the need for the train to stop again elsewhere. At present we cannot do this because the overlap between the two power systems does not include a station. However Network Rail are developing plans to extend the overhead lines southwards to Shepherd's Bush station. This would allow the changeover to take place in that station. The journey time saving on the route would be about 2 minutes as a result].*

IR reported that unavoidable delays had occurred on the route due to London Overground engineering work, local events e.g. home games at Chelsea Football Club with Southern being the only train service operating in that area. Fortunately Southern were able to deal with the demand by temporarily using additional stock but recognise that the service needs to be improved and increased on a more permanent basis. Southern has highlighted these issues to the DfT.

JN enquired whether there are any plans to make alterations to the stations or build new stations to accommodate demand at busy periods. IR advised that West Brompton station is very close to Chelsea football ground so another station would be unjustified. Southern will also serve the new Chelsea Harbour station, once opened, and the current timetable has allowed for trains to stop at this station.

AW highlighted a lack of Southern publicity at Harrow and Wealdstone station, suggesting that a simple poster within the booking hall that stated Southern's service would suffice. IR responded that Southern welcome such feedback as they do not have the capacity to check each location on a regular basis and agreed to investigate.

IR

3. CHILTERN RAIL

DW introduced himself as the new liaison representative for Chiltern, in replacement of John Davidson and briefly explained his experience within the rail industry.

See attached briefing note.

Chiltern's PPM chart tabled at the meeting.

AW requested more carriages on the Marylebone to Aylesbury (Met route) in the peaks because the new S Stock will have fewer seats than the current stock. DW agreed to investigate. *[Post Meeting Note: Unfortunately there are no plans to increase the number of carriages on the route to address this issue. As alluded to in the meeting rolling stock requires considerable investment and there is no sound business case for doing this. Due to the*

Ticketing and Settlement Agreement we would not see any potential revenue uplift from carrying more passengers as the revenue is split between LUL and Chiltern Railways in a fixed agreement. Under these circumstances we would not be able to raise the capital needed to invest in more trains.

All peak services are currently booked to be multiple trains when calling at intermediate LUL stations including Harrow on the Hill. Most of these are 5 carriages in length and we would be unable to lengthen these trains due to operational restrictions, or without affecting other services. Whilst we are currently unable to provide more carriages we do constantly monitor the loadings of all our services and should the case change in the future then we would revisit the proposal].

MC asked whether Chiltern had been approached with an rail-related proposals relating to the 2012 Olympic games. BW advised that he was not aware of any proposals relating to the Olympic games but these may be drawn up nearer to the time.

AW enquired whether Freedom Passes could be used on Chiltern trains within TfL area. DW suggested that if the station forms part of the TfL agreement then Chiltern would follow TfL rules in relation to their use. DW agreed to confirm usage at the next meeting.

DW

JN commended the refreshing report given by DW and welcomes the improved service on the Chiltern Met route. DW also offered to provide further information on the Evergreen 3 project at the next meeting, if required.

JN commented that he feels the new bridge at Petts Hill will improve the area and encourage more people to use Northolt Park Station. AW suggested Chiltern use the new bridge to advertise their services at Northolt Park station. DW agreed to consider.

DW

4. 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.

AW enquired whether all the land needed to progress the scheme had been acquired. HI explained that Harrow Council have been in discussions with the landowners for over a year and are working through the situation. Harrow Council also has a contingency plan if the land cannot be secured. HI confirmed that four lanes of traffic under the bridge will be implemented regardless of whether

the land is acquired.

MANAGING CROWDING ON THE UNDERGROUND PRESENTATION

Mike Strzelecki, Director of Safety at London Underground, presented the measures taken to control crowds safely on the underground network.

See attached presentation slides.

In relation to converting stations to have step-free access, MS explained that the original target of 33% stations becoming step-free by 2013 is no longer achievable due to lack of funding. However, it is hoped that 28% of stations will still become step-free by 2013.

MS highlighted the fact that all stations have station specific safety plans that all staff are aware of and practised in following.

AW enquired whether LUL would benefit from the governments plan to bring forward capital expenditure on the rail network. MS advised that no additional funding was yet evident but regardless of funding, LUL will continue to improve.

AW mentioned the 29% reduction of seats on the Met Line, which was due to be compensated by an increased frequency of trains however there is now likely to be a minimum 3 year delay in providing more trains due to signal modernisation work. MS explained that LUL were forced to abandon their tender with Metronet as the company went into administration but LUL do plan to retender for the signalling work, which will now be a better system than was originally planned. LUL also need to further promote the giving up of seats to passengers who really need a seat e.g. pregnant or elderly passengers. MS agreed to represent the groups views at the next board level meeting and assured the meeting that if more trains can be fitted into the timetable then this issue would be further considered.

MS

AW highlighted the narrow platforms on the Victoria Line, which can be problematic for passengers. MS agreed that platform width is a limitation but advised that staff are very experienced at dealing with this issue and if the service is running to time then passengers should be moved on fairly quickly.

5. LONDON OVERGROUND

Unfortunately Mark Eaton from LOROL was unable to attend the meeting but did send the following update for inclusion in the minutes.

- Over our first year of operation, train performance had climbed almost 2percentage points until Period 9 (Nov 2008) but that period 9 was terrible for us due mostly to infrastructure failures and we have been working with Network Rail to improve matters. More recently performance has come back to acceptable levels although last nights de-wirement on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) also caused

the suspension of our services.

- With regards to stations our focus is on the design and development of the Phase 3 package of enhancements which will kick off on-site towards the summer of this year and amongst other things deliver the renewal of all station systems (CIS, CCTV, PA)
- With regards to the query raised at the last meeting on the East London line Phase 2 service proposals continue to be looked and we anticipate that TfL will ask us to operate a service via Crystal Palace to Clapham. The shape and nature of this is still not fixed (at least as far as LOROL is aware) and we expect to be in a better position to provide the Rail Liaison Meeting a clearer update at the Spring meeting. The East London Line itself remains on course for full operations commencing in May 2010.
- Finally with regards to the introduction of the new class 378 trains the construction of these trains is now running behind schedule. We are now being told that we will receive the first train for passenger service in March / April. When received this unit will first be deployed on the Watford to Euston service.
- I should add that we do have a unit on depot at Willesden for technical and route acceptance testing purposes and that the testing runs are proceeding well.

6. LONDON UNDERGROUND

a) General Matters

MK highlighted the poor communication and lack of facilities faced by passengers at Harrow and Wealdstone station. It is difficult to hear the PA system, particularly on platform 6, the lights are out on platform 6 and the toilets are out of order with station staff advising passengers to use the toilets at the nearby McDonalds restaurant. On a more serious note, MK explained of an incident on the 29th December 2008 whereby a passenger was nearly hit by a fast, through train. No announcements were being made so the passenger was on the edge of the platform looking for a train. Luckily other passengers were able to alert him of the oncoming train but MK believes improvements must be made to the communication system at Harrow and Wealdstone before a fatality occurs. MK has written to various organisations but all to no avail. PW agreed to investigate and report back.

In relation to Harrow and Wealdstone station PW advised of some improvements planned at the station starting in April 2009. Improvements will include better CCTV coverage, improved lighting and customer help points. Local residents will be written to and advised of the work but it is not expected to cause them any inconvenience. AW asked whether any of the works proposed at the station require approval from English Heritage. PW to check

PW

PW

and liaise with HI as necessary.

PW confirmed that Stacey McManus is the Harrow and Wealdstone station manager and agreed to relay the relevant information to her.

AM confirmed that London Underground now have full responsibility for Harrow and Wealdstone station.

MK also mentioned the demand for the fast service from Harrow Wealdstone to Euston and wondered whether there are any plans to increase the service. MK was advised that London Midland are responsible for the service and any changes to the frequency would be their responsibility.

AW added that the lack of security on fast platforms at Harrow and Wealdstone has been criticised with barriers sometimes left open. AM agreed to pass comments onto Stacey.

AM

PW reported that the peak Pay As You Go (PAYG) will now only be charged during the am and pm peaks allowing passengers to travel off peak on PAYG during the middle of the day.

PW also reported that Network Rail railcard holders can now purchase a discounted one-day travel card. Machines are currently being updated to apply the discount and once completed LUL will update passengers through advertising.

In relation to penalty fares, PW advised that from the 11th January 2009 the penalty fare for travelling without a valid ticket will be increased from £20 to £25, if paid within 21 days, and £50 if not paid within 21 days. Passengers will also have to provide their name and address at the point of being caught, regardless of whether they then pay the full penalty fee. Revenue officers will be on hand to manage the situation and diffuse any issues. MC commented that this penalty fare system needs to be mirrored on London Overground to avoid confusion.

PW advised that the TfL website has recently been revamped with a new travel tools page. TfLs website allows passengers to check whether there is any engineering work on their line of travel and passengers can be automatically emailed any delays on their line, free of charge.

Wood Lane station has now been opened and is very much in demand.

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, has issued a consultation document titled 'Way To Go' to gather suggestions on how to improve the transport system and particularly within orbital boroughs. PW to advise AW of deadline for responding to the consultation.

PW

b) Met. Line Upgrade

AM reported that some work on the signalisation has been carried out recently. The new s-stock will be tested later in the year for use in early 2010.

Timetable changes due in December 2009. The peak Met Line service will have a slight increase in trains per hour to Baker Street. AM hopes to present timetable at the next meeting for consideration.

AM advised that a decision about the Chesham shuttle service is not expected before Summer 2009 but the service will form part of the 2010 timetable.

AM confirmed that converting Harrow on the Hill station to have step-free access is still on track and will not be affected by the college development.

In relation to performance AM reported period 7 (October) being the most productive period, with an average of 96% headway achieved. Period 8 (November) was slightly lower at 92% due to the loss of point work and period 9 (December) was also lower due to signalling problems.

c) Station Accessibility Issues

In relation to accessibility JN commented that stations need to become more accessible if passengers are to be able to use the accessible trains. Also, passengers should be more aware to overcrowding due to the crime it can attract. MS responded that with approx. 28% of stations become step-free this will enable the mobility impaired to get around London by selecting the stations that are most in demand. Additionally staff are always willing to assist passengers where necessary. In relation to crime on the underground, MS reported that crime figures continue to decrease. Increased BTP on the network has helped to reduce crime, especially crime against staff and while LUL do make some announcements to alert passengers about crime they must also ensure they do not scare passengers.

AW mentioned that the lack of a lift facility at Northwick Park station make it difficult for passengers to get to the nearby hospital. AW reported people parking in Harrow Town Centre to then get a bus to the hospital. AW also feels that usage would increase at Northwick Park station if it was made more accessible. MS agreed to take comments on board and feed back.

d) Car Park Issues

With regard to parking at Stanmore station, AW again suggested the station car park be double decked and a PFI agreed with a private company to manage the car park. PW commented that double decking has been considered at Stanmore. MS also explained that the Treasury regulates how much money is borrowed and LUL have no more borrowing capacity at present

AM

MS

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(PFIs are considered borrowing).

e) Services

Metropolitan Line

Planned engineering work scheduled for Saturday 24th/ Sunday 25th January and Saturday 31st January/Sunday 1st February. Met Line will be suspended between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Watford, Amersham and Chesham. Rail replacement bus services will operate.

JN commended the rail replacement services offered by LUL. AM explained that their experience of providing rail replacement services has led to better planning of such provisions.

AW highlighted the non-working train display on platform 4 of Harrow on Hill station. AM advised that he is aware of the problem and the display is to be fixed soon.

AW mentioned a document circulated advising of increases in station car park charges, however AW requested information on the car park charges, which is station specific. PW agreed to investigate and update. *[Post meeting note: PW informed AW that all station car park charges are now available on the TfL website, categorised by tube line at the following address: www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/tubestationcarparks/default.aspx].*

PW

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Future Meeting Dates (all at 9.30am):

Wednesday 1st April 2009 – Committee Room 5

Wednesday 1st July 2009 – Gallery (above Staff Restaurant of Civic site)

Wednesday 7th October 2009 – Gallery (above Staff Restaurant of Civic site)

Wednesday 6th January 2010 – venue to be confirmed