
Report of meeting from external body

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Information Item (b)
LTW 318
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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 1 April 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 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.

Present

Harrow Public Transport Users Association (HPTUA)

Anthony Wood AW Chairman

Harrow Council

John Nickolay JN Councillor
Manji Kara MK Councillor
Jerry Miles JM Councillor
Mrinal Choudhury MC Councillor
Navin Shah NS Councillor
Andrew Saffrey AS Engineer, Transportation
Hanif Islam HI Transport Planner (only present for part of the meeting)
Helen Ennis HE Minutes

Rail Operators

Diggory Waite DW Chiltern Railways
Youssef Cockbaine YC London Midland

Andrew Morsley AM Metropolitan Line, London Underground
Stuart Burnett SB Metropolitan Line, London Underground
Phil Wood PW Planning, London Underground
Stacey McManus SM Harrow & Wealdstone, London Underground
David Millard DM London Underground
Matt Ball MB London Underground
Mark Eaton ME London Overground
Bruce Pollard BP London Overground

London Travelwatch

David Leibling DL

ACTION

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (Anthony Wood) welcomed all.

1. APOLOGIES

Angela Back
Bernie Peal

a) Minutes of Previous Meeting: 7th January 2009

Page 6 - ME clarified an item relating to the East London Line Phase 2 service proposals. The anticipated service will actually run from New Cross Gate through to Clapham Junction via Denmark Hill.

Minutes agreed.

b) Matters Arising

To be dealt with under agenda heads.

2. SOUTHERN

No attendance.

3. CHILTERN RAIL

DW provided a summary of Chiltern's performance for the previous periods. Briefing note to be circulated to all.

DW/AW

DW explained that the flooding at Sudbury Hill was a combination of heavy rainfall and melting snow. It was concluded that the incident was a result of freak weather conditions and does not pose any long-term risk.

DW agreed to provide an update on the 'Evergreen 3' project at the next meeting.

DW

AW enquired whether there were any plans to make Sudbury Hill station more accessible. DW advised that there are no plans to upgrade the station at present and any funding provided by the DfT would only be 50% of the total cost. HI added that funding could be sought from other boroughs as the station is positioned near the boundary of three boroughs. DW explained that Chiltern's previous bids to the DfT have all been successful and agreed to participate in any joint funded scheme relating to the station.

DW reported that the six mark 3 vehicles, for the Marylebone route, are due in December 2009.

PRESENTATION ON THE CIRCLE LINE CHANGES

Presentation slides distributed at the meeting.

DM confirmed that the proposals have taken the anticipated Crossrail service into consideration.

DM advised that there are no plans to 'step back' at Hammersmith as the 20 minute cycle allows the trains to be move on more quickly.

NS asked whether the frequency changes relate to the Met Line. DM explained that this planning has not allowed for the new trains. The new Met Line trains are due in Spring 2010 with a proposed operational timeframe of late Autumn 2010.

DM clarified that the signalling aspect of the changes will be the 3rd part of 3 phases.

NS highlighted the reduction of seats on trains. SB replied that it would not be until 2011 at the latest until more seats would be available. AW added that more trains in the peak (especially between Baker Street and Harrow on the Hill) have been requested to deal with the issue of reduced seating.

DL enquired whether any trial runs are due to be carried out over the August bank holiday. DM advised that a weekend of trial runs are

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planned but not during the bank holiday. Likely to be carried out in late June/early July.

AW mentioned a number of complaints received from passengers travelling from Baker Street or Finchley Road. When waiting for a train there are often 3 consecutive Uxbridge trains and then a fast service to Amersham, possibly due to the running time between Baker Street and the City. Fiona Irvine has looked into this issue and AW is happy with the response provided. The December 2009 timetable will address this problem with additional running time between Aldgate and Baker Street.

AW enquired whether all three platforms are used at Hammersmith. DM advised that currently only two platforms are used but the new service pattern will use all three platforms.

AW informed the meeting that he has received confirmation of no changes to the pattern of service on the Met Main Line. The 20 minute cycle of trains will only affect the Hammersmith and City line - the Met Main Line will continue to operate on a 16 minute cycle.

BP asked how the new service will be marketed to passengers. DM advised that changes will be made to the front of the trains and the LUL diagram will also be updated. AW suggested the line be given a new name. DM agreed to take back.

AS enquired whether there is any spare capacity between Edgware Road and Moorgate due to the spare platform at Moorgate. DM advised that Moorgate has previously been considered but not progressed due to problems with using Moorgate. Tower Hill model is the only possible solution.

DM

4. PETTS HILL

AS provided an update produced by Hanif Islam.

- Bridge works are almost complete on site following the installation over Christmas. An opening ceremony is planned for 11.45am on the 21st April 2009 by HRH the Duke of Gloucester.
- Highway works have now started on site. Full road closures are not anticipated although single lane working may be required occasionally, and particularly when the final resurfacing takes place.
- Acquisition of private land has not been completed. The land owner has gone into liquidation and therefore the process is taking much longer than anticipated. May have to continue without the land.

JM commented that he is pleased at how well the bridge project has progressed.

5. LONDON OVERGROUND

ME provided an update.

Performance over the last period has been affected by the winter

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weather conditions but is encouraged that recent performance figures have increased.

Currently awaiting delivery of new trains, which will undergo testing at the Willesden depot and then be released into service on the North London Line at the end of May 2009.

ME reported no timetable changes but explained the proposed engineering work on the North London Line. Weekend closures are expected for the next 13 months and from late December 2009 until April 2010 the East end of the North London Line (East of Gospel Oak) will effectively be closed. Replacement bus services will be operating and advertising will be in place to alert passengers to the closures.

London Overground is gearing up to take over stations between New Cross Gate and West Croydon and will officially take ownership on the 20th September 2009. However, the full East London Line service will not be operational until 23rd May 2010.

BP informed the meeting of a new station, Imperial Wharf, currently being constructed on the north banks of the River Thames on the West London Line. The project is on time, if not ahead of schedule and due to be opened in Autumn 2009. London Overground will operate the station.

BP advised that negotiations are ongoing with the rail unions to ensure the threat of a rail strike is removed. Management are keen for staff to take ownership of their stations and customer service training has been taking place.

BP reported high quality cameras to be installed on London Overground stations. Most but not all of the footage will be watched live at the control centre.

In connection with the North London Line engineering works, a revised timetable will become operational from the 20th April 2009 on the North London route, which will also allow for freight trains.

NS enquired how the additional freight trains expected is being communicated to nearby residents who already have concerns about the noise generated by freight trains. ME explained that some publicity will be carried out but they do not expect noise levels to drastically increase as there is no change to the volume of vehicles but instead just a change in the timings.

MK enquired whether line 2 is nearer to residents. ME agreed to check.

DL asked about the use of contract security staff on stations. BP advised that the vast majority of security staff on London Overground stations are LUL staff with the exception of late at night when contract security staff are used.

ME

AS enquired whether there are any plans to lengthen the high level platforms at Willesden Junction. BP explained that improvements are proposed as part of the Phase 3 works. The new trains will initially be three car train length and then an additional car will be added to make them four car train length. There are also proposals to double the capacity at Willesden Junction.

MK enquired whether London Overground have any plans to provide a fast Watford to Euston service, much like that offered by London Midland. ME advised that this is not on the agenda at present.

LONDON MIDLAND SERVICES

YC introduced himself as the Stakeholder Relations Manager for London Midland. YC provided a summary of issues relating to the poor service experience by passengers on the Watford – Euston service:

- New timetable introduced on 15th December 2008.
- Short notice engineering works at Milton Keynes mean last minute cancellations just before Christmas.
- Blockade needed at Watford as four overhead lines came down.
- Bad weather in Feb 2009 meant a speed restriction of 75mph on the WCML. Some services had to be suspended to get units back in position.
- Snow got into units at Northampton, which were subsequently withdrawn from service.
- Emergency timetable then implemented.
- Full route and branch review undertaken to examine how London Midland dealt with disruption at Euston. The outcome identified the need for an extra controller and announcer at Euston and a Service Delivery Manager, all of which are in place and specific to Euston.
- To deal with the morning peak overcrowding there are now 12 car trains operating between 0730 and 0845 with an aspiration to add more carriages to the evening peak.
- Passenger counters have been installed on some stock to monitor usage and this will feed into any future timetable planning.

AW mentioned the no weekend service at Harrow and Wealdstone. YC advised that he understood it to be due a health and safety issue. SM not aware of any health and safety issue. YC agreed to investigate and clarify.

YC described a 'bounce-back' service to run Watford-Bushey-Harrow and Wealdstone-Euston and then back again. This service will start in May 2009, initially only in the peak with 9 per day Monday to Friday. This will be an additional service to the timetabled service with a view to make it fully operational by December 2009.

YC advised the group that London Midland are currently bidding on freight paths. One path is already confirmed and the aspiration is to have all nine paths by the end of the year.

MK mentioned the introduction of the timetable on the 15th December 2008. YC explained that it was a new timetable that was introduced,

YC

which was commissioned by Network Rail and Virgin. New and extended routes were also part of the new timetable and the staff allocation for its implementation were not accurate. The lack of driver knowledge on the new/extended routes also added to the problems.

MK asked why track problems added to the delays given that the track was recently updated as part of the WCML project. YC responded that some track problems are unavoidable and on this occasion was the result of a blown fuse. London Midland worked closely with Network Rail to alleviate delays to passengers.

YC continued that, due to the poor service experience by passengers, London Midland have offered three free days of travel to all season ticket holders as way of an apology. MK commented that this gesture does not include passengers at Harrow and Wealdstone. YC agreed to check and respond directly to MK.

YC

HARROW & WEALDSTONE STATION MATTERS

AW asked what improvements are planned at Harrow and Wealdstone station. SM explained that they are currently at the initial stage of the refurbishment programme, which is due to be completed by Spring 2010. The refurbishment will cover stations from Harrow and Wealdstone to Queens Park, excluding Willesden Junction. Improvements will include improved communication systems to passengers e.g. screens, PA system etc., station repainted, new benches and refurbished toilets.

AW highlighted the need to improve information provided to passengers. SM advised that customer information screens should update automatically but accepts this has not been happening and assured the meeting that the problem is being addressed.

MK reported a leaking pipe on platforms 4 and 5 during heavy rainfall and waiting rooms full of litter. In response to the leaking pipe, SM advised that the problem has been identified and if it cannot be maintained then it is Network Rails responsibility to replace the pipe. In relation to the litter problem, the station does have an on-site cleaner and a higher frequency of cleaning has been recently introduced. NS feels that such poor facilities are not acceptable. SM agreed to investigate further.

SM

SM advised that there is now a telephone point on the footbridge directly to the Samaritans and posters on the platforms providing details of how people can get in touch with the Samaritans, given the number of suicides at the station.

MC commented that there is no signage on the Harrow side stating 'Civic Centre this way'. SM advised that improved signage will form part of the refurbishment programme.

HARROW ON THE HILL STATION – CANCELLATION OF ACCESSIBILITY WORKS

AW explained that the accessibility works proposed at Harrow on the Hill have been put on hold. On a recent visit to the borough by the Mayor of

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London, AW had the opportunity to suggest accessibility work for the station to Boris Johnson with a view to implementing them in two years as oppose to eight years. AW to put suggestions in writing and pass to Tony McNulty and Boris Johnson to progress with the DfT.

MB explained that the accessibility works at Harrow on the Hill, estimated at £25m, have been put on hold due to lack of funding. AW highlighted the changing position of Harrow on the Hill on TfL's priority list – Harrow was originally in the top 3rd of the list but is now in the bottom 3rd. AW expressed his disappointment that the priority criteria initially set is not maintained. MB advised that some stations have moved up the priority list as they form part of the 2010 accessibility target e.g. Amersham.

NS commented that he too is very disappointed that Harrow on the Hill will not be made accessible, as originally proposed and added that communication about the decision was very poor. AW added that there was no official press release.

JN suggested the old post office lift shafts at Lowlands Road be considered as a short-term solution. AM advised that these lifts were factored into the considerations but rejected as the lift shafts are under the platforms with no link to the ticket hall. MB to investigate further and provide response.

MB

6. LONDON UNDERGROUND

a) General Matters

PW provided an update.

- TfL's Managing Director, Tim O'Toole, is leaving the organisation at the end of April 2009. Howard Collins has been appointed as Chief Operating Officer.
- LUL won the Public Transport Operator of the Year award and North Harrow station was the winner of the Customer Service award - the first time a station outside of Central London has won the award. AW added that much of the success for this award was due to James Bond, Senior Station Assistant.
- Mike Brown also received an award for his contribution to transport.

PW advised that the third platform at Stanmore station has now been installed. PW to advise when use of the platform will commence.

PW

Users of the station requested a staggered ramp at Stanmore to replace the current staircase to the car park. PW to investigate.

PW

In relation to the installation of wide aisle gates, 140 have now been installed with a further 88 expected to be installed by the end of 2009.

New signalling control centre currently being built at Hammersmith with a completion date of December 2010, for whoever wins the tender.

MB mentioned that LUL had just won the Best Metro Service award.

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AW enquired whether new rules had been introduced which required a minimum Oyster card top up of £5. PW explained that TfL are currently trialling a minimum top up of £5 at five stations where they had received complaints about queues at the ticket offices. Passengers can top up their Oyster cards with any amount of credit at the ticket machines. The minimum £5 top up only applies to the five trial ticket offices chosen and there are some exceptions to the rule.

AW raised the issue of the removal of trees at North Harrow station and mentioned a letter of complaint received from nearby residents regarding the lack of communication that the trees were being removed. AW commented that better advance warning should have been given and the issue could have been handled more sensitively. AW suggested a meeting be organised with local residents to explain the reasons for removing the vegetation. AM agreed to investigate and take back comments.

AM

b) Met. Line Upgrade

SB provided an update.

Two s-stock trains currently on test, one in Derby and the other in Dolby. One of the trains will then go to the Neasden Depot in September 2009 with a full roll out of new stock in Spring/Autumn 2010.

Signalling modification work currently being carried out to ensure they can accommodate the new s-stock.

Platform lengthening at Aldgate for the new s-stock.

More drivers will be required by December and approx. 60-70 drivers will be based at Harrow.

Signal problems at the Neasden depot have caused some delays to services, which should be resolved when the depot is completely re-signalled in two years.

c) Station Accessibility Issues

None.

d) Car Park Issues

None.

e) Services

With regard to the Piccadilly Line at South Harrow station, AW advised that both platforms are being used as terminating platforms. Need to consider how this is communicated to passengers. SB agreed to forward comments onto the Piccadilly team.

SB

DL reported trains leaving Moor Park ahead of schedule. SB explained that they are aware of the problem, which is caused due to the lifting of the speed limit on the line. SB to ensure clocks are installed for drivers.

SB

DL also reported poor visibility of staff at the station. SB agreed to pass comments on to the relevant colleague.

SB

AS enquired whether TfL publish any Met Line specific timetables. AM advised that these are available at stations but agreed to send some to Andrew directly for distribution at the Civic Centre.

AM

AW mentioned that CCTV at Harrow bus station is due to be improved and hopefully linked to the rail station. AM added that LUL are happy to provide permission to Harrow Council as long as they provide the funding.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Future Meeting Dates (all at 9.30am):

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 – Committee Room 5