

---

**Secretariat memorandum**

Author : Jo deBank

Agenda item 12

LTW 352

Drafted 20.5.10

---

**Report on transport user events in Croydon and Romford****1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To report on the passenger engagement events (transport user 'surgeries') held in Croydon and Romford and to report the findings of the travel surveys given out on the day.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report be received for information.

**3 Information**

- 3.1 As part of its stakeholder work, London TravelWatch held two events to engage with transport users at a local level. This gave London TravelWatch a chance to speak to people 'on the ground' and hear from people who don't often get a chance to engage with directly. Croydon and Romford were chosen to correspond with London TravelWatch's strategic priorities for outer London and interchanges.
- 3.2 The event at Croydon was busier than Romford, as Croydon is much busier (and more diverse) town centre. However, the same issues at Romford cropped up repeatedly (short turning on certain bus routes, congestion owing to major roadworks, pedestrianisation of parts of the town centre leading to buses not being able to stop there), so we got a good sense of the main concerns there.
- 3.3 It was also helpful to be able to hear many positive messages about public transport. In Croydon in particular, there was a general sense of satisfaction with the transport provision (in Croydon, there is a tram system, many buses and several rail lines) and any gripes tended to be personal rather than any over-arching problem in the area. In both places, there was a sense that public transport had improved over the years, and that people valued their local services.
- 3.4 At both places (perhaps naturally, given the location and timing), the Freedom Pass was mentioned continually. It is clearly relied upon by many people, and at Romford, we found many people confused about whether the new Freedom

Pass, which now have an electronic chip and can be used nationally, could be used immediately. It became clear that there was a problem, and we issued a news release after we visited Romford reminding people that the new pass could be used immediately

- 3.5 At both locations, we found many wheelchair users or mobility impaired people who were not aware that all buses in London were now accessible, or how to use the ramps on buses. We were able to give advice and practical demonstrations (along with the local bus operators) on how to use the buses, especially the ramps. In some cases, people who did not use buses said they would in future.
- 3.6 It was very useful for London TravelWatch to speak to people 'on the ground', including many people who have never complained or discussed their transport provision to anyone previously. These people do not necessarily fit the demographic of people who appeal to London TravelWatch, and so it is very valuable to be able to hear what the travelling public have to say about transport in their area.
- 3.7 On the day, we gave out travel surveys, with the prize draw incentive for returning it. The prize was an Oystercard with £50 on it. We had a relatively good rate of return, and the findings can be found in the attached report.

#### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 London TravelWatch intends to do more transport users' surgeries, in places yet to be decided. Our decision will be based on London TravelWatch's strategic priorities : bus, outer London, social deprivation and interchanges - and specific events, such as a major train or tube line closure. We will also ensure that areas are chosen to cover as wide a range of demographics and transport modes as possible.
- 4.2 We are considering holding events in Kingston, an outer borough south west of the city and Southall, west of the city which has a sizable ethnic minority base for 2010/11, but this is yet to be confirmed.
- 4.3 We will also consider the format and timing of such events in order to reach a varying audience of users.
- 4.4 We are also aiming to have a London TravelWatch presence at some relevant and appropriate local community events around London.

#### **5 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 5.1 Public transport is used by a significant number of people who are on lower incomes, older people, people with disabilities and by minority ethnic and faith communities. Therefore any measures which would significantly benefit public transport are likely to benefit these disadvantaged groups of people.

## **6 Legal powers**

- 6.1 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).

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 There is a cost implication for holding events, including staff and board time, travel and sustenance. There is also a cost implication for the design and print of the travel surveys.