
Secretariat memorandum

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2012 Games legacy for London's transport users

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform members of feedback on the transport provision during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 1.2 To begin the process of compiling an evidence base for incorporating lessons learned from the user experience, to secure a legacy for transport users.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 London TravelWatch has been closely involved in the preparations and planning for the Games with operators and authorities from 2004 onwards. In particular our emphasis on passenger information, travel demand management and co-ordination between providers, as well as commentary on individual sites has been acknowledged as instrumental in helping set the tone and direction of the planning of the transport provision for the Games. The success of the arrangements particularly in these areas reflects the contribution made by London TravelWatch in the early stages of the planning process.
- 2.2 The 2012 Games will leave a big legacy in terms of the enhancements to the transport infrastructure that have been made but this report deals predominantly with the softer legacies in terms of the way that staff worked and were deployed and also advocates retaining and building on a number of temporary operational changes that were put in place during the Games.
- 2.3 There is still much work to be done to build up a comprehensive picture of how the transport system operated during the Games and transport operators and providers are conducting their own reviews of the lessons to be learnt. The London Assembly's Transport Committee will be doing a scrutiny on this subject in November and this report will form the basis of our submission to this.
- 2.4 Prior to the games London TravelWatch conducted mystery shopping exercises with volunteers from Transport for All. This found that whilst all the venue stations were accessible there were details that could have been improved upon, for example the lack of tactile paving at the top and bottom of staircases.

This is an important detail for blind and partially sighted travellers. We were also disappointed that around some of the venue stations, most notably the DLR entrance at Greenwich station, the relevant local authority highways department had not maintained dropped kerbs, again an important issue for mobility impaired travellers. However, in most instances, appropriate remedial action to address the issues we reported was taken in advance of the Games

- 2.5 The particular role London TravelWatch played during this period was to maintain pressure on Transport for London (TfL) and other operators to keep standards high and to react swiftly and effectively to events as they unfolded. Staff kept a watching brief on activities, meeting and communicating regularly with TfL, the Transport Co-ordination Centre (TCC), and operators. During the Games, staff and members made a point of travelling to various venues and interchanges and fed back their experiences. Public comments received through various means were also recorded.
- 2.6 Our website was used to signpost transport users to the most appropriate sources of information and social media was also used throughout the Games period to provide more 'real time' information. Our website and social media presence were constantly monitored during this period and altered to reflect trends in interest in the advice on the website and questions asked by passengers.
- 2.7 A number of press releases were issued during the period, most of which were taken up in some form, and the Chair did several interviews from studios at the Olympic Park.

3 General feedback

- 3.1 The undoubted consensus is that London's transport network functioned extremely well during the period of the Games despite the fact that record breaking numbers of passengers used the public transport network and more services were provided. There was a significant reduction in usage of the road network in central London. Disruptions to both the road and rail networks were significantly fewer than would have been expected under normal circumstances, although the Transport Commissioner has suggested that levels of unplanned disruption on the Underground were not much less than usual, what was different was that the media did not report on this so widely.
- 3.2 TfL report that so far complaints levels have been only slightly above average. Appeals relating to the Games period have yet to appear in the London TravelWatch system, but based on the numbers of initial contacts we received during the same period we are not anticipating a significant increase in volume.

4 What worked well

- 4.1 A key element was the provision of comprehensive, accurate and timely information for passengers in a range of different formats. Information was given on the web and through social media, in signage, maps and through the physical presence of staff and travel ambassadors on the transport network and 'games makers' in the venues.

- 4.2 The TCC was central to the effective control and flow of information and also to the interaction between and within organisations associated with transport.
- 4.3 The transport network performed well both in terms of reliability of the infrastructure and the responsiveness of the various agencies when problems did occur. This can be attributed to the enhanced programmes of maintenance and fault solving in the period prior to the Games. Detailed scenario planning beforehand, with mitigating measures put in place, also helped to reduce the impact of infrastructure or service failure during the Games, for example by relocating supplies, equipment and maintenance personnel into London in easy reach of potentially vulnerable locations. Investment in new infrastructure completed well in advance of the Games also meant that teething problems had been ironed out. Network Rail in particular adopted different operating practices which resulted in significantly improved performance such that on the North London Line of London Overground, Public Performance Measures of 99%, and 98% were achieved during the Olympic Games and for the six weeks of the whole Games period respectively. This was even more remarkable given the additional trains that were run on this route throughout the period. The experience of this period suggests that a greater management and organisational focus on London would bring considerable benefits in terms of reduced disruption if adopted by Network Rail.
- 4.4 The accessibility of the transport network was enhanced for and during the Games by improvements to the physical infrastructure, but also by the temporary provision of items such as boarding ramps at selected London Underground stations and the general increase in staff availability. There was also considerable publicity for accessible routes to Games venues.
- 4.5. On the road network TfL operated a flexible, pragmatic approach, enabling a demand responsive use of the Olympic and Paralympic Route Networks. This allowed them to be used by ordinary traffic when not strictly required for Games use. The issuing of Penalty Charge Notices along the routes was in the event restricted to those contraventions which would have been classed as a traffic offence in any circumstances e.g. banned right turns.
- 4.6 Persuading freight operators to make road deliveries at night and other times outside of normal busy periods contributed to reducing congestion and traffic volumes overall. Freight operators on the railways also did what they could to reduce day time operations to free up capacity for passenger services during the Games. There was also less disruption to passenger services as a result of changed maintenance regimes for freight locomotives as fewer trains failed whilst in service. In addition the presence of standby locomotives and crews at locations such as Stratford and Willesden Junction would have reduced the impact of any disruption if it had occurred.
- 4.7 Train operators provided many additional services, particularly late in the evening to enable spectators to return home after events. These were often held back when events overran their allotted timescales, to enable passengers to reach them from the Games venues. This showed that operators and Network Rail were capable of being able to react in 'real time' with a degree of flexibility. We were pleased to hear of incidents where operators reacted swiftly by providing unplanned extra services to deal with higher than anticipated demand.

- 4.8 In the run up to the Games it was apparent that Network Rail had made a substantial effort to clear their land of litter and refuse, and graffiti from buildings and structures, on routes used to access Games venues, to help ensure London looked at its best and to reduce the risk of problems arising. We very much want to see this standard of cleanliness maintained in legacy.
- 4.9 Employers and employees adopted flexible working practices that resulted in a flattening of peak hour demand. This had the benefit of reducing overcrowding / congestion on the network, helping to provide additional capacity for spectators travelling to the Games as well as providing an unexpectedly easy commute for some passengers.
- 4.10 Perhaps the most important element was the joined-up approach taken by all operators, providers, local authorities and other stakeholders in order to deliver an excellent public transport service throughout the Games. The One Team London approach was evident not just in the magenta tabards worn by all transport staff but in the co-ordinated focus on joint planning and collective attitude to working together to avoid and alleviate problems. Staff at all levels knew exactly who to contact in other organisations and how to get things done for the benefit of passengers. Regardless of who employed them, staff were focussed on finding solutions that worked and went beyond the boundaries of their organisation's contractual territory in order to give a good service. Very senior staff from all organisations could be regularly spotted at key points around the transport network seeing for themselves how things were working in practice. Not only did this help improve their own understanding of the needs of passengers it also made a very public statement to their front line staff about how important it was to get the service right.

5 Areas that did not perform so well

- 5.1 TfL acknowledged that in the first few days of the Olympics some of the messaging to users warning of disruption and overcrowding was not sufficiently targeted. There was a subsequent redressing of the balance of the message when it became apparent that it was not needed.
- 5.2 Some of the temporary road closures and alterations / changes to station layouts and queuing arrangements caused confusion to regular users, and in some cases it transpired that they were not necessary but once again, in the light of their experience things were changed.
- 5.3 London TravelWatch was disappointed that at Clapham Junction there was no Games signage, nor did there appear to be sufficient staff present to direct passengers to the correct platforms for Olympic venues. At this key interchange there appeared to be less of the 'OneTeam Transport' approach that elsewhere built relationships between different operators – despite the fact that many spectators interchanged to different operators at this location.
- 5.4 We were also disappointed that there was not always sufficient signage at key interchanges giving passengers clear information not just about the location of

bus stops but also how the key destinations that could be reached by bus. The Paralympics in particular could have provided the opportunity to showcase the availability of London's bus fleet as a fully accessible mode of transport. We suspect that, in the absence of clear information, many mobility impaired visitors to London would have not appreciated this and thought travel by taxi was their only option.

6 Risks and challenges subsequent to the Games

- 6.1 Passenger expectations of what providers are able to achieve have been raised by their Games experience. This presents a challenge in terms of legacy, as not all of the changed arrangements used during the Games may be practical or affordable in the long term. However, a lot of these made good business sense and we hope that the results will help build an economic case for operators and providers to adopt them in the long term, once they have undertaken their own reviews.
- 6.2 The use and availability of staff at the central London main line termini and London Underground stations to pro-actively help passengers was very well received, as this made them seem accessible and approachable. However, there is a danger that subsequently staff may 'retreat' to positions behind counters, and that the knowledge / experience gained during the Games may be lost without effective signage or information.
- 6.3 The 'Walking Maps' distributed in large numbers during the Games helped people to 'help themselves', and also alleviated overcrowding and congestion on the tube network in central London by encouraging people to walk or use buses rather than use the tube for short distance journeys . However, this approach needs to continue with improved signage to bus services at major interchanges, better identification of passenger lifts at stations such as Paddington, and more general promotion of facilities available and where information can be obtained.

7 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 7.1 The experience of the Games as recorded above was extremely positive in including individuals and groups who previously have experienced difficulties in using the transport network. The challenge is now to continue that positive experience in the normal day to day operation of the network.

8 Legal

- 8.1 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). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the 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.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising for London TravelWatch from this report.

10 Conclusions and further action

- 10.1 Clearly the Games were a hugely successful operation for the most part in relation to transport provision. However, these experiences need to be built upon so as to ensure that the positive user experience is continued.
- 10.2 Overwhelmingly what made the real difference and underpins virtually every success was the complete focus on the needs of the customer and how these could best be met during the Games. Signage anticipated the choices transport users would need to make at every stage along a walking route or at transport interchanges, transport staff were well informed and able to deal with all enquiries relating to their location regardless of their employer, and they were highly visible and encouraged to actively engage with passengers in a helpful and good humoured fashion.
- 10.3 The Department for Transport is now proposing to adopt a more flexible arrangement to agreeing to timetable changes related to 'one-off' events such as sporting fixtures. In discussion with London TravelWatch officers it has been suggested that this greater freedom to alter services outside the franchise arrangement should be accompanied by developing a good practice guide for dealing with such events. It has been suggested that this guide for national use is developed by London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus incorporating the experience gained during the Games. Adherence to the principles outlined in such a guide would be the basis on which franchise dispensations are granted.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 That members note this report and adopt the changes in policy and service provision as outlined in Annex 1 as London TravelWatch policy.
- 11.2 That members agree that London TravelWatch should be involved with the production of a 'good practice guide for short term timetable alterations for special events' subject to agreement with the DfT and Passenger Focus.

Annex 1 – Initial suggestions about the legacy for passengers and transport users from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Co-ordination between transport providers: Examples	Commentary/suggestions
1. Stratford station integrated management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain integrated management at Stratford • Consider whether any other multi-modal interchanges would benefit from a similar integrated management structure • Provide visible ‘One Team Stratford/Paddington’ etc multi agency staff teams at all major stations
2. St.Pancras International – Stratford High Speed Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider integration of HS1 into mainstream London transport provision i.e. acceptance of Travelcards and Oyster Pay As You Go between St. Pancras and Stratford
3. Transport staff freedom to be helpful to passengers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collective focus on helping transport users get around easily and unconstrained by the boundaries of provider was seen to be a major force for enabling staff to ‘do the right thing’ by passengers – need to recommend to organisations that this gives a very positive image in the eyes of users which reflects well • on the organisation providing the information
4. Communications updates with stakeholders by Network Rail, TfL and operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were very effective in informing stakeholders of problems on the Network and the background to them so it would be good to retain this facility
5. Central London ‘One Team Transport’ ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider deployment of similar teams during large events and/or during the main tourist season. • Consider regular deployment of ‘office based’ transport staff in public facing outreach events
Improving the accessibility of the public transport network: Examples	Commentary/suggestions
1. Deployment of boarding ramps at London Underground stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make this arrangement permanent • Consider expansion to cover more stations and • Consider integration / closer coordination of this activity with National Rail Assisted Passenger Reservation Service
2. Euston – St.Pancras walking route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a permanent arrangement to allow opening of the side entrance at Euston.
3. Revised station and traffic layouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether any apparently popular but temporary layout changes should be made permanent e.g. use of current emergency entrance / exit at Shadwell DLR station
4. Walking maps of key locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were extremely well received and • helped reduce crowding at pinch points so good to retain and enhance coverage

Improving the reliability and resilience of the transport network: Examples	Commentary/suggestions
1. 'Blue Light' emergency response vehicles for London Underground engineering staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain these as they enable a faster response • in safety critical situations. • Presence of police in the vehicle is useful in case of public disorder or to preserve evidence
2. Retain London-based Network Rail rapid response teams and area stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain these as they enable a faster response in safety critical situations and to minimise disruption to passengers in the event of equipment failure
3. Network Rail fixed over 3,000 overhead line faults on the 20 mile route between Liverpool Street and Shenfield – some of these faults had been outstanding for over 2 years in the months prior to the start of the Games. This was done instead of the proposed complete renewal of the equipment which could not have been achieved in the timescale required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail, London Underground, and other infrastructure providers (including Highway Authorities) to review whether immediate fault fixing would lead to better infrastructure reliability rather than waiting for a complete renewal project to come to fruition. • Consider the establishment of a 'London' focused directorship within Network Rail.
4. Rail freight operators rerouted or rescheduled around 50% of their operations within London freeing up capacity for passenger services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider permanent rerouting / rescheduling of freight trains through and to London. • Consider the establishment of an actual informal London focused team to co-ordinate Network Rail activity and interface with TOCs in the London area.
Benefits to commuters and business	Commentary/suggestions
1. Spreading of peak hour flows by the use of flexible working practices, resulting in reduced congestion / overcrowding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers should be encouraged to retain working practices established during the Games where this can result in greater business efficiency.
2. The use of night time collections and deliveries resulting in greater certainty of delivery time and a reduction in congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses should be allowed with appropriate safeguards to be able to make use of night time deliveries and collections on a regular basis.