
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 7
LTW523
Drafted: 16.05.16

Update on some topical accessible transport issues

1 Purpose of report

1.1. To update members on some topical accessible transport issues.

2 The London Assembly's published report – Travelling with a Sensory Impairment in London

2.1. This report, published in March, is a good reminder that accessibility is so much more than step-free access. It highlights the significant number of Londoners travelling with a sensory impairment and some of the measures that would make their journeys better. The report is available at <https://www.london.gov.uk/assembly-publications/leading-way-travelling-sensory-impairment-london>

2.2. It states that over 80,000 Londoners have a severe or profound hearing loss; 175,000 live with sight loss and 30,000 Londoners have a dual sensory impairment. 700,000 trips are taken by people over 75.

2.3. It makes several recommendations:

- providing more and better-real time and audio-visual information;
- enhancing the visibility and availability of staff to assist those with an impairment;
- supporting additional individual assistance and mentoring services;
- raising awareness of use of assistance dogs by those with impairments or medical conditions;
- improving bus driver training;
- improving hearing loop systems and signage;
- providing real-time audible or 'App' information telling passengers which bus has arrived;
- tackling street clutter

- addressing concerns about ‘shared space street designs’;
- providing consistent use of tactile paving;
- addressing the multiple issues relating to bus stop bypasses (the routing of cycles around the back of the bus stop) - “bus stop bypasses should be considered an innovation until multiple issues relating to pedestrian safety are addressed”
- calling for TfL to produce a set of standards to describe what those with sensory impairments might expect.

3 Our campaigns – accessible bus stops and highways obstructions

- 3.1. London TravelWatch’s campaign to get all bus stops to be accessible has undoubtedly been a great success. 85% of all stops meet TfL’s accessibility criteria. TfL is making good progress towards the Mayor’s 95% target (by the end 2016), although this may not be met. Only two boroughs, Barnet and Bromley, were below 60% by the end of quarter 2. These boroughs are both making progress.
- 3.2. Anecdotally we have observed highways paving works at bus stops and the opportunity to introduce the correct kerb height has been lost. This is disappointing.
- 3.3. These accessible bus stop statistics are for formal, fixed bus stops. Additionally there are 192 sections of Hail-and-Ride route (700 streets) that have no formal bus stops and so are inaccessible to those needing the facilities of a bus stop. Members may wish to consider whether London TravelWatch should now focus on the access issues of Hail-and-Ride sections of bus routes. These often serve areas where many passengers will have difficulties boarding the bus. This issue featured in our Transport Priorities document.
- 3.4. For many years groups representing disabled people have been concerned about the obstruction of the pavement, particularly by traders with advertising boards. The adoption, by TfL, of a zero tolerance approach to highways obstructions has been a considerable achievement. The issue has been recognised in both the recent Assembly report (where they used our photo) and by the new Mayor in his manifesto: *Reduce street and pavement clutter on TfL Roads*.

4 Bus stop bypasses

- 4.1. As part of the design of segregated cycle tracks developed for the cycle superhighways TfL have introduced cycle tracks that are routed around the back of bus stop waiting areas. These are objected to by many disabled groups including the RNIB, Guide Dogs, Age UK London and Transport for All. The Guys and St Thomas’ Trust is reported in the press to be opposed to a stop near its site on Westminster Bridge. It is said by these groups that

these bus stops are either more difficult, or not possible for their clients to use in comfort and safety.

- 4.2. London TravelWatch's view is similar to the Assembly (see paragraph 2,3), and we want to see a proper assessment of the issues associated with TfL's design of bus stop bypass. TfL committed to us during consultation that they would do this.
- 4.3. London TravelWatch is working with others looking at the possible introduction of Zebra crossings or similar at the crossing point of a bus stop bypass. This will effectively mean that cyclists must stop for pedestrians rather than have priority as they do now.
- 4.4. Additionally there is to be a survey of users of the stops.
- 4.5. Whereas TfL's preferred design for bus stop bypasses is to route cycles around the back of bus stops a few London boroughs are implementing bus stops on cycle routes with the cycle tracks routed through the area that passengers board and alight. TfL tell us they are monitoring these stops.

5 Progress on step-free stations

- 5.1. For a number of years rail operators have been able to bid for funds to introduce accessibility features to their stations under the banner of Railways for All. This fund was administered by the DfT and has been the main source funding for large scale projects, such as lifts and minor schemes such as low height ticket windows.
- 5.2. The Hendy review has proposed that the fund be reduced by 50%. No final decisions on this proposal have been made.

6 Turn-up-and-go

- 6.1. Passenger assistance for older and disabled travellers on a turn-up-and-go basis is available at all of London Underground's staffed stations. This is generally a good service that is welcomed by disabled people, but some, particularly those crossing from one major terminus to another, would like London Underground to be a part of the Passenger Assist network. This would reassure passengers that assistance could be positively booked ahead of the day of travel.
- 6.2. Historically disabled and older people have had to book 24 hours in advance for assistance at National Rail stations. Even at major stations, advance booking is encouraged. However, the arrival of London Overground, with stations staffed from first to last train, has meant that assistance is available on their services on a turn-up-and-go basis.
- 6.3. However, there are some complexities for turn-up-and-go services on other National Rail services beyond just the staffing of stations. For example, some of the rolling stock only has limited seating and it could be that a turn-

up-and-go passenger may take a booked passenger's seat later in the journey.

- 6.4. And so it is welcome that the Association of Train Operating Companies are running a trial turn-up-and-go assistance scheme at 36 National Rail stations: The stations are:

Balham, Barking, Caterham, Charing Cross, Cheam, Clapham Junction, Coulsdon Town, East Croydon, East Dulwich, Fenchurch Street, Hackbridge, Kenley, Lewisham, Limehouse, Liverpool Street, Mitcham Eastfields, Mitcham Junction, Norbury, Purley, Riddlesdown, Sanderstead, St Pancras International, Stratford, Stratford International, Streatham Common, Streatham Hill, Sutton, Thornton Heath, Upminster, Victoria, Wallington, Waterloo, Waterloo East, West Norwood, Wimbledon, Woolwich Arsenal.

7 Uber WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles)

- 7.1. Members will recall that in our submission to the Law Commission and in response to TfL's recent review of Private Hire Vehicle regulation we asked that large companies should be mandated to provide a proportion, say 10%, of their vehicles with wheelchair access.
- 7.2. It is therefore welcome that Uber have announced that they will provide such a service, although the scale of the proposal is not yet known.

8 London TravelWatch priority

- 8.1. London TravelWatch has a particular remit to represent disabled users. Improving this group's travelling experience will, of course, improve everyone's. London TravelWatch also prioritises supporting the work of the Assembly Transport committee where it can add value.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1. 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).

10 Financial implications

- 10.1. There is no financial implication for London TravelWatch because of this report.