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**Secretariat memorandum**

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LTW529

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Update on bus network performance

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To provide the Board with a summary of a briefing London TravelWatch has received from TfL regarding the performance of the bus network

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1. That members note the report.

**3 Background**

- 3.1. Members have discussed the recent deterioration in the performance of the bus network and the impact on passengers many times over the last year. Recently TfL briefed officers and one member on their assessment bus performance. This report summarises the presentation given.

**4 Update on bus network performance**

- 4.1. Since the early '90s, bus patronage has been increasing. This rise has mirrored the rise in bus kilometres operated. A steady rise up to 2022 had been forecast, but there has recently been a dip in patronage and the forecast reduced, though still on a long term upward trend.
- 4.2. The focus of TfL's current work is:
- the restoration of bus performance and to match capacity to patronage growth;
  - improvement to customer experience;
  - to improve the good safety record of the bus network;
  - to improve the environmental performance of the bus fleet.
- 4.3. Bus performance is assessed in two ways. Firstly the reliability of the network. This has generally deteriorated over the last three years. Secondly, bus speeds. 158 routes have seen a decline in speed of over 5% between 2013/14 and 2015/16. 28 of these have seen a decline of over 10%.

- 4.4. TfL say that the primary driver of the decline in patronage is the deterioration in bus speeds (2.1% year-on-year decline) and reliability (6.7% increase in Excess Waiting Time [TfL's measure of reliability]).
- 4.5. The deterioration in performance varies spatially and is closely aligned with patronage. Patronage in 2015/16 was 71m lower than 2014/15, a year-on-year decline of 3%.
- 4.6. 2015/16 revenue, compared to budget is £87m down (£71m is attributed to the patronage decline).
- 4.7. Lost patronage could be worth £200m or more in fares revenue over the Business Plan. Returning speeds and reliability is crucial to encouraging lost passengers back to the network.
- 4.8. TfL are undertaking a series of mitigations:
- incentivising operators in outer London to improve EWT;
  - introducing temporary and permanent bus schedule reliability schemes, including adding buses to schedule;
  - using the traffic signalling systems to progress buses
  - delivering bus priority schemes.

## **5 Discussion**

- 5.1. It is clear that bus services are performing less well than in the recent past due to a number of reasons. This is impacting on passengers to such a degree that some are choosing not to travel by bus. There is also a substantial impact on TfL's fares revenue.
- 5.2. Whilst it is welcome that TfL are now focussing on returning performance to previous levels, and there are actions underway, this will be a very difficult to achieve.

## **6 London TravelWatch priority**

- 6.1. Buses carry more passengers than all the other public transport modes and are the only fully accessible mode that serves all of London 24/7. Members have prioritised bus services in all of London TravelWatch's work.

## **7 Equality**

- 7.1. Bus services are the only mode that is universally accessible and covers the whole of London 24/7. It is therefore important that performance be maintained as disabled passengers may not be able to use other modes.

## **8 Legal powers**

- 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).

## **9 Financial implications**

- 9.1. No implications of this nature arise directly from this report.