
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 14

Ref: LTW565

Drafted: 10.10.17

Confidential: Bus passenger safety update

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To update members regarding London TravelWatch's commissioning of research into bus occupant safety.

2 Background

- 2.1. On 23 February 2016, members discussed road and bus safety issues following an approach and meeting with a bus safety campaigner, whose primary interest is the safety of third parties in highway collisions – pedestrian and cyclist collisions.
- 2.2. Members determined to include some of the road and bus safety statistics reported by the Metropolitan Police Service in the quarterly TfL Performance report along with a summary of the data TfL publishes regarding bus incidents that result in injury to staff, passengers and third parties.
- 2.3. Members agreed that London TravelWatch should seek external funding to investigate bus passenger safety.
- 2.4. Members agreed that although collisions involving buses could cause serious injuries to passengers and third parties, typically pedestrians, they would not undertake any significant new work on this because there were other public bodies that are better placed to undertake such investigations. Indeed these public bodies have duties placed on them to do that. TfL and the London boroughs, along with the Metropolitan and City of London Police Services have a duty placed on them to investigate road crashes causing injury. This is a core part of their work, which they undertake diligently. The Traffic Commissioner for the South East is responsible for licensing and regulation of bus operators and drivers. This includes their management of road safety.
- 2.5. Bus operators (along with their drivers) are primarily responsible for bus driving standards. There are approximately 7,500 covert assessments of drivers per year carried out by AA DriveTech. There are a further 22,000 mystery traveller surveys undertaken for TfL annually, which include a 'safety and comfort' assessment. The bus companies have their own

approaches. For example, Go-Ahead London uses instructors and mentors to monitor their drivers if they have concerns. Go-Ahead have signed up to the Institute of Advanced Motorists programme, ensuring that drivers have further advanced driver training. Bus operators are often their own insurers and so have a direct financial incentive to reduce incidents and claims.

- 2.6. TfL has training plans to improve safety across London's bus operators. TfL has recently announced measures to reduce road casualties including, for example, incentives for the bus companies, an innovative training video and a scheme whereby drivers can report safety issues to a third party.

3 Update

- 3.1. Road safety statistics are now reported to members as part of the TfL Performance Report
- 3.2. A summary of the incidents reported by bus companies that result in injury to staff, passengers and third parties is now reported to members as part of the TfL Performance Report.
- 3.3. In spring of 2017, we called for expressions of interest from the transport consultant community and academic institutions to work with us to investigate bus occupant safety. We have subsequently collaborated with Professor Andrew Morris and the Loughborough Design School to bid for external funding from the Road Safety Trust to investigate bus occupant safety.
- 3.4. The Road Safety Trust Board will meet on 26 October to consider our bid.
- 3.5. The bid is attached as an appendix. The project will mean working with the bus operators in London. Ahead of a decision on funding, we have met with the Managing Directors of three of London's largest bus operators. They have agreed to work with us on this project. TfL's Head of Bus operations has given her support to the project.
- 3.6. Loughborough has undertaken a similar, but much smaller investigation of on-board bus incidents outside of London and so have developed a methodology for analysing incident reports. This study will go further, view CCTV, and interview passengers where they are willing. Loughborough will analyse 600 incidents with a view to understanding the causes of incidents and proposing counter measures.
- 3.7. Loughborough will publish their report in the academic journals it chooses. London TravelWatch will publish the report and promote the findings with two seminars aimed at the bus industry, i.e. the operators and manufacturers.

4 London TravelWatch priority

- 4.1. Whilst incidents on buses are small in number compared to the number of journeys there are a significant number of slips trips and falls on board

buses. There has been no significant investigation of this issue, in this way since 1990 when Professor Peter White investigated a limited number of incidents, i.e. those reported by the police. This is an issue that the Board has agreed to investigate.

- 4.2. However, London TravelWatch does not have the budget to undertake this investigation and so has bid for funds from the Road Safety Trust.

5 Legal powers

- 5.1. 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).

6 Equalities and inclusion

- 6.1. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising from this report.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1. As part of the bidding process London TravelWatch has allocated staff time and a sum of £4000 to the project because the Road Safety Trust prefers to support projects with some non-trust funding. Our contribution along with the work in kind contribution by the bus operators will be significant.