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**Secretariat memorandum**

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LTW571

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Update on implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's ticket office review

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To advise members on the progress made on implementation of the recommendations arising from the review of ticket office closures on London Underground.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the report.

**3 Background**

- 3.1. The London TravelWatch review, carried out in November 2016, made the following recommendations:

1. Staff should be available to assist passengers at all stations
2. Staff should stand out from the general public as their visual presence is of fundamental importance to passenger feelings of safety. To achieve this, staff uniforms should be made more visible through use of brighter colours
3. There should be a clear focal point in every station where passengers can find staff
4. Assistance for passengers with disabilities and those who are unfamiliar with the network should be consistently available
5. Staff should avoid grouping together, and should be proactive in looking for passengers who may require help or advice
6. Staff should have local knowledge of stations at which they work, using their iPads to assist passengers with onward journeys where necessary
7. Signage on ticket machines should be updated so that passengers are clear about the different functions available at the different machine types

8. More broadly, TfL should consider how they can make passengers more aware of what products and services are available to them at ticket machines
9. Ticket machines should be updated to provide a wider range of functionality
10. Annual season tickets should be available to purchase on ticket machines
11. The 48 hour restriction on Oyster card refunds should be removed
12. Help point routing procedures should be revised to ensure that calls made by passengers are always answered
13. Hearing loops should be available and clearly signposted at every station
14. Visitor Centre messaging, branding and opening hours should be adjusted to make their purpose, location and availability clear to all passengers

#### **4 Progress against these recommendations**

- 4.1. TfL published an immediate response to the review which can be found at the end of the original report to the TfL Board of 15 December 2016<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2. Since then there has been progress on a number of recommendations, but others have taken longer to implement.
- 4.3. There have been two phases of trials, focusing on increasing satisfaction with staff visibility at stations. Phase one happened in May-June 2017 and phase two from November to December 2017.

#### **5 Staff availability at stations**

- 5.1. Following the London TravelWatch review in November 2016, TfL agreed to recruit additional staff (325 posts, 125 part-time and 200 full-time) to station roles and also to amend working practices to improve staff visibility in ticket halls. Staff are being recruited and allocated to smaller, single-staffed stations and those with unstaffed control rooms.
- 5.2. Many of these people will be rostered at “Metro” and “Local” stations, which should considerably improve staff visibility at these locations.
- 5.3. Stations with the lowest visibility scores across the network have implemented local action plans to improve the visibility of their station staff. The plans included measures such as local roster adjustments and ticket machine functionality refreshers. These plans are having a positive impact. As of November 2017, two thirds of the 30 worst performing stations are now hitting their staff presence target. London TravelWatch has conducted a small number of Mystery Traveller Surveys

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<sup>1</sup> <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/board-20161215-item14-ticket-office-review-final.pdf>

since the previous review and these show similar results with staff being present in reasonable numbers.

- 5.4. Previous discussions with TfL suggested that the additional staff (once trained) and amended working practices have improved staff visibility at stations, but not as much has had been hoped for. TfL attribute this to low staff morale, and the continuance of behaviours and practices amongst staff from the previous pre-ticket office closure patterns of working. Adoption of new ways of working has slowly evolved and improved, as staff have got more used to the concepts involved.
- 5.5. One area that London TravelWatch has taken up with TfL is the concept of greater staff visibility for passenger reassurance. From talking to staff, it was clear that there was further work to be done around the idea that greater staff visibility provided reassurance to passengers. Staff had previously thought that they needed to be talking to or directly helping a passenger to provide this, whereas the real need was to be seen at key locations within stations at appropriate times, thereby providing reassurance to passengers by having an obvious staff presence.

## 6 Staff uniforms and passenger safety

- 6.1. New red high visibility vests have been tested with staff engaging with passengers at stations (see figures 1 and 2 below). The final design is currently being confirmed. Staff have also been issued with new cases to carry handheld devices.



Figure 1- Phase 1 vest

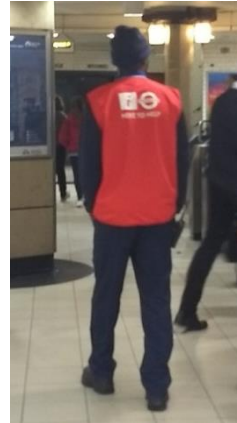


Figure 2- Phase 2 vest

- 6.2. TfL commissioned a poster campaign on their stations highlighting the availability of staff and the first to last train coverage from January 2017 onwards. There has also been a review of CCTV coverage and lighting at London Underground stations.

## 7 Lack of focal point at stations

- 7.1. Focal point trials: There have been two trials of focal points during 2017. A number of example types of focal point were trialled at various stations of different types

across the network were trialled in May 2017, and then different designs of focal points were trialled from October to December 2017.

- 7.2. London TravelWatch carried out a mystery shopping exercise of these trial focal points in May 2017. The results of this are attaches as Appendix A. Our assessment is that of the trial installations put in so far, these have not met our expectations for such focal points. The mystery shopping exercise result was also reflected in research that TfL commissioned to look at this issue also.
- 7.3. Phase 1 - Information zones: At a number of stations, information zones were enhanced, using eye-catching wall and floor vinyls (figure 3). Research found visibility of the information zones was improved by enhancing the surrounding wall, but little benefit from the installation of floor vinyls. Passengers indicated that high level signage to some information zones would be beneficial.
- 7.4. For the first trial period in May 2017, a member of staff was located at the information zones (figure 4).



















Figure 3 - enhanced information zone



Figure 4- staffed information zone

- 7.5. From a passenger perspective, this provided a clear focal point on the station for customers to get the help they needed. However, at some stations, staffing the information zone throughout the day presents an operational challenge to London Underground.
- 7.6. Phase 2 trial- Focal Point design: The most recent focal point trial took place in December 2017. This focused on three different designs. The results (see figure 5 below ) suggested that signage with some text about assistance, with a picture of staff, conveyed the clearest message and provided the most assistance, whilst projecting the most warmth. However, the research also highlighted that it was important that focal points were placed in areas where staff stood anyway- and this would be different for each station. Introducing these focal points will be an ongoing focus for TfL in 2018. Each station where a focal point will be introduced will have to be looked at individually to find the best place for the point. Staff behaviours will continue to be an important part of ensuring the focal points provide the correct assistance from staff.
- 7.7. TfL aim to place focal points where staff are already standing- for instance at the gateline. Therefore the focal points should, for the most part, be staffed consistently. Figure 6 below shows how the focal point is placed where staff already are found,

aiming to reassure passengers that they can ask for help when a staff member is standing on the gateline.

		Liverpool Street	Oxford Circus	Westminster
	Message			
	Visibility			
	Assistance			
	Warmth			

The sign at Oxford Circus was let down by poor visibility in situ, hampering its overall performance. However the message was clear and qualitatively felt to have the edge over Liverpool Street in terms of 'warmth'

Figure 5 - from Dec 17 TfL focal point trial



Figure 6 - Focal point trial in action, Westminster station, Dec 2017

- 7.8. Tabard Trials: During Phase 1 of the uniform trial, Customer Service Assistants were provided with red high visibility vests (see figure 1 above) to wear on the unpaid part of the ticket hall to increase their prominence to customers. The dark red vests had "Here to help" written on the back with an 'i' symbol for information. Passengers (according to TfL) responded very positively to the improved visibility. During Phase 2 of the trial, carried out in November 2017, a brighter version of the vest was tested with all staff in the ticket hall, with a similar design of an 'i' and 'Here to help' on the back (see figure 2 above). The visibility of staff was much improved when they were wearing this vest. The final design is currently being confirmed but when finished it will be rolled out to all staff.
- 7.9. Help Points: TfL also tested ways to improve the visibility of customer help points (figure 7). While an improvement, customer research suggests still more needs to be done to highlight the location and function of help points. Many passengers see the help points as a passenger alarm only, and not an option for obtaining general assistance. (During the course of work on help points it was discovered that at a

number of locations the help points were not being answered because they were being sent to unstaffed telephone points).

- 7.10. Following on from these trials TfL are now adopting a standard format for the ‘Help points’ similar to the design used at Westminster station as shown below (figure 8). The blue vinyls aim to make the help point clearer and show that it should be used for information as well as emergencies.



Figure 7- high visibility help point



Figure 8 - help point with new vinyls at Westminster

## 8 Assistance for passengers with disabilities

- 8.1. A review was carried out of the ‘turn up and go’ process, with staff iPads being used to improve the consistency of the service e.g. by confirming staff attendance at destination and interchange stations.
- 8.2. TfL has committed to improving their turn up and go service for disabled and older passengers. As a first step, TfL carried out a survey of passenger and staff experience with the current process. Feedback from 70 disabled passengers and a number of station staff was collected to understand where TfL can improve.

'Turn up and go' Issue	Improvement planned
Passengers are not always met at interchange or destination station as planned	Developing an app to support the ‘turn up and go’ process to reduce the likelihood of not being met. As a quick-win, we are changing the process to ensure staff radio ahead with a passenger’s destination and requirements
Trains may terminate early or be re-routed	Build communication with Service Control and Train Operators into the process improvement plan for ‘turn up and go’.
Some staff are reluctant to provide assistance or they think they cannot leave the gateline	Staff communications and myth busting briefing

Passengers cannot find a member of staff to help	We plan to trial a new help-point at East Acton that connects to a staff member's iPad to help passengers to get the help they need when they arrive at stations.
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8.3 London TravelWatch has previously expressed concern about TfL's lack of commitment to the 'Passenger Assist' service operated by National Rail operators. This is an issue for disabled people needing to use London Underground as part of a longer journey between National Rail stations that require the person to travel across London.

**9 'Grouping' of staff can make it difficult for customers to ask questions**

9.1. This is a related point to general staffing levels.

**10 Staff local knowledge**

10.1. A review was carried out of local information available on handheld devices. In addition as part of the change programme many staff were allocated to stations that they not previously worked at. As this has now become more settled staff local knowledge of their new stations and local environment should improve.

**11 Signage on ticket machines should be updated so that passengers are clear about the different functions available at the different machine types**

11.1. Signage has been updated to differentiate machine types. Fare posters have been amended to include information on other ways to purchase tickets e.g. online or



Figure 9 - New ticket signage at Westminster station

via contactless payment card.

- 11.2. An example of the new style signage has been installed at Westminster station and is shown in figure 9.

## **12 Ticket machines should be updated to provide a wider range of functionality**

- 12.1. Ticket machines have been updated so as to allow the purchase of Boundary Zone extension tickets and also for Railcard discounts on through tickets to National Rail destinations from 21 May 2017.
- 12.2. A new Oyster 'app' is now available allowing passengers to purchase Oyster products online such as 'Pay as you go' and Travelcards, and collect these from any station or bus within 30 minutes of purchase, without the need to use a ticket machine. This is not available to passengers using pre-2010 issued (first generation) Oystercards, but they are offered the option of changing their card.

## **13 Annual season tickets should be available to purchase on ticket machines**

- 13.1. This recommendation has not been implemented and as noted at previous London TravelWatch Board meetings TfL's response does not seem to address the issues faced by Annual Season Ticket holders. London TravelWatch has subsequently commissioned and published research on the needs of Annual Season Ticket holders. However, TfL have yet to respond to this research.

## **14 The 48-hour restriction on Oyster card refunds should be removed**

- 14.1. Information to warn customers of the 48-hour refund rule was added to ticket machines in May. Work continues to determine how this functionality can be improved, while still providing adequate protection against fraudulent use. Work to reduce the duration when a refund is not available to 24 hours is underway and should be ready early in the New Year.

## **15 Help point routing procedures should be revised to ensure that calls made by passengers are always answered**

- 15.1. A new help point strategy has been implemented with a review of help point locations, and the use of new technology where appropriate. This also includes a commitment to move help points where these are not in the most appropriate places for passenger or operational use.

## **16 Hearing loops should be available and clearly signposted at every station**

- 16.1. All stations are fitted with induction loops and these need to be clearly sign posted.
- 16.2. Initially a number of portable hearing loops were trialled in January 2017 but were found to be unsuitable for use within Underground station environments due to the high levels of background noise and electrical interference. Following this initial trial, TfL conducted a further test of the neck-loop variant of the device utilising staff



iPads in May (figure 5). The device worked well and allowed the conversation to move to quieter areas of the station with less interference.



Figure 10: Neck loop design hearing loop

- 16.3. However, the hearing aid users taking part in the trial recommended using “voice to text” functionality on the iPads as an alternative method of communication with hearing impaired customers. Some new hearing aids do not support hearing loop functionality and the customers taking part in the trial preferred “voice to text” as a form of assistance.
- 16.4. TfL will continue to research the use of neck loops with a wider group of hearing aid users, trialling at Waterloo and Leicester Square, whilst additionally providing station staff with some guidance on using voice to text to communicate with hearing impaired customer using their handheld devices.

## **17 Visitor Centre messaging, branding and opening hours should be adjusted to make their purpose, location and availability clear to all passengers**

- 17.1. Visitor centres have had their profile raised on the TfL website and there is also additional signage within London Underground station to them. The tube map index has had a small ‘I’ symbol inserted to denote a visitor centre at the station, but it is not very prominent. The opening hours of some Visitor Centres were extended, and the hours at Kings Cross St Pancras and Victoria were extended by an additional hour on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Usage will be monitored over the summer period and the additional hours reviewed in September. No Visitor Centre is open beyond 6.00 pm on a daily basis, except Heathrow Airport which closes at 8.30 pm. The information on the TfL website Visitor Centre section does not give prominence to the transport ticket selling function, but the Fares and Payment section does mention this.
- 17.2. A Mystery Traveller visit by London TravelWatch to the Paddington Visitor Centre in December 2017 found that this was not sign posted from the London Underground station and did not have prominent signage on the Network Rail concourse. There was no TfL literature on display or available in the reception area of the Visitor Centre, with the emphasis on sightseeing tours and other tourist attractions.

## **18 London TravelWatch priority**

- 18.1. The issues raised in this report impact on all users of London Underground stations, and so have a high priority for London TravelWatch.

## **19 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 19.1. There are various implications arising from this report for disabled people as outlined above.

## **20 Legal powers**

- 20.1. 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).

## **21 Financial implications**

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