
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 20 September at
6 Middle Street, London EC1**

Contents

- 1 Chair's introduction, pre-meeting announcements**
- 2 Apologies for absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**
- 5 Matters arising (CAC013)**
- 6 Actions taken (CAC014)**
- 7 Update on London TravelWatch research into incomplete journeys on Oyster (CAC015)**
- 8 Ofcom review of non-geographic phone numbers (CAC016)**
- 9 GLA consultation on penalty fares (CAC017)**
- 10 2012 fares update**
- 11 Casework report and update (CAC018)**
- 12 Any other business**
- 13 Resolution to move into confidential session**

Present

Members

David Barry (Chair), Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant, Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (Deputy Chair)

Guests

Simon Feast Fares & Passenger Benefits Manager, Department for Transport (DfT) (Items 1-10)
Lucy Preston Ticketing Policy Manager, Transport for London (TfL) (Items 1-10)

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke Chief Executive
Bryan Davey Director, Public Liaison
Sharon Malley Executive Assistant (minutes)

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and made the standard housekeeping and safety announcements.

2 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Consumer Affairs committee held on 15 June 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 Matters arising (CAC013)

5.1 Publishing Passenger Charter on website

The Director, Public Liaison, reported that he hoped the Passenger Charter would be published on the website by the time of the next meeting of the Consumer Affairs committee.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.2 Publicity around non-Zone 1 journeys

It was agreed that the information from the press release around the problem of being charged for travelling through Zone 1 when the passengers had taken an alternative route that avoided Zone 1 should be published in the consumer rights section of the London TravelWatch website.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.3 Transport for London complaints handling

It was noted that many areas of TfL complaint handling were improving but Surface Transport had not kept pace so a meeting was being arranged specifically with Surface Transport to discuss this issue.

5.4 Joining Stratford and Stratford International stations

It was noted that London TravelWatch had raised this issue again with senior personnel at Transport for London. As the Docklands Light Railway link between the two stations was now open, it was agreed that London TravelWatch would now pause to establish whether there were genuine passenger concerns and would review the matter when feedback was to hand.

It was also noted that the planning permission for the station had specified the provision of a free travelator between the stations rather than a train journey that attracted a separate charge. It was agreed that it would be useful to establish whether the London Borough of Newham was aware of the fee-paying nature of the DLR link when it discharged the planning condition for the travelator.

Action: Director, Public Liaison; Director, Policy & Investigation

5.5 Distribution of How to Complain leaflet

It was agreed that copies of the How to Complain leaflet should be sent to all authorities' libraries that have not already received them.

Action: Committee services

5.6 Research project on staff at London Underground gatelines

This item would be updated at the next meeting.

Action: Director, Policy & Investigation

5.7 Lost property details on London Buses posters

It was agreed that this action should remain open until the details on the London Buses posters about claiming lost property had been amended.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.8 Roll-out of card-only ticket vending machines

Simon Feast of the Department for Transport reported that train operating companies were currently being sensitive to the issue of passengers who do have cash but have not bought tickets because the only way to purchase them was through card-only vending machines.

5.9 Tickets purchased online for collection at stations

It was agreed that a copy of Passenger Focus's report into the issue of tickets purchased online that was published in July 2011 would be distributed to members. It may be appropriate to consider this for a future agenda item.

Action: Committee services

6 Actions taken (CAC014)

It was noted that many of London TravelWatch's successes arose from its regular meetings with transport operators, for example the improvements in case handling following meetings with Southern.

It was agreed that these meetings would be better reported to the Board than the Consumer Affairs committee.

Action: Committee services

7 Update on London TravelWatch research into incomplete journeys on Oyster (CAC015)

The Director, Policy & Information, presented an update on London TravelWatch's research into incomplete journeys being carried out on Oyster Pay As You Go. He noted with thanks that TfL had shared with London TravelWatch information relating to "Auto Fill", a ticketing technology that would complete certain journeys where PAYG customers had failed to touch out at the end of a journey. He observed that this did not yet work for journeys where passengers had not touched in at the start, or for journeys that were not part of a regular travelling pattern, so there was some work still to do on this.

It was noted that since the publicity around the launch of London TravelWatch's report, there had been a 10% increase in the number of passengers claiming refunds for incomplete journeys.

Members welcomed changes TfL had made to Oyster online statements, in line with London TravelWatch's recommendations, making them clearer to understand.

It was noted that passengers were still unable to check balances or purchase Oyster products at Southwestern stations or on Tramlink.

It was noted that certain out-of-station interchanges existed, such as between Marylebone and Baker Street, where passengers could interchange at street level but be charged for a single journey, but that TfL chose not to publicise them on the basis that it might be confusing and they aimed to provide the most useful information for the majority of passengers.

In relation to the appearance of card readers, TfL had made recommendations to the train operating companies about how they should look but the TOCs did maintain some freedom over their final appearance.

Lucy Preston reported that TfL was seeking to improve awareness among passengers of the improved website for resolving problems and was trying to compile a broader picture of where and why unresolved journeys occurred.

Lucy Preston agreed to seek further details about the potential for Tramlink to sell Oyster products.

Action: Committee services

Members considered whether differential fares were successful in altering passenger behaviour, specifically in relation to encouraging people to travel off-peak when possible. It was agreed that this issue should be considered as a potential piece of work in future.

Action: Committee services

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

8 Ofcom review of non-geographic phone numbers (CAC016)

The Executive Assistant presented a report on the current position relating to Ofcom's review of non-geographic phone numbers and their use by transport providers such as TfL.

It was noted that the cost of calling TfL from mobile telephones continued to be of concern to London TravelWatch and that it would be useful to have more information about whether the increased cost had affected call volumes.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would return to this issue when Ofcom released its next report and that London TravelWatch would welcome the creation of a low-cost tariff for PAYG users and for TfL to use it.

Action: Committee services

9 GLA consultation on penalty fares (CAC017)

The Director, Policy & Investigation, presented a report on the Mayor of London's consultation about proposed changes to penalty fares on Transport for London services.

It was noted that the Department for Transport was currently consulting on increases to penalty fares for national rail services but that those penalty fares would not be the same as those now being proposed for TfL services by the Mayor of London. There was a

benefit to passengers in these fares being the same, to improve comprehension across the integrated network.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch supported the principle of fare enforcement but believed that changing penalty fare levels now, while the DfT was in the middle of its own consultation on the same issue, was premature.

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

Action: Director, Policy & Investigation

10 2012 fares update

It was agreed that the Mayor of London's recent announcement about fare increases in 2012 would be considered in more detail at the next Board meeting, when members would have had the opportunity to absorb the detail of the changes.

Action: Committee services

11 Casework report and update (CAC018)

The Director, Public Liaison, presented the Casework report for the period April to June 2011.

It was noted that performance levels by operators had generally been maintained but that London Buses was an area to focus on in future.

It was noted that the removal of London TravelWatch's phone number from bus posters had had an impact on the number of bus-related calls being received.

Members noted that the additional table breaking down the complaints about Transport for London by mode was helpful but were concerned that cases could be logged against either TfL or the specific mode and that this might lead to erroneous reporting. The TfL category should be retained for policy-based complaints only and other complaints should be logged by mode.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

Members congratulated the casework team on maintaining their own high levels of performance despite a period of understaffing and problems with IT.

12 Any other business

There was no other business.

13 Resolution to move into confidential session

The meeting resolved, under section 15(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the next following item/s, that it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded from the meeting.

In confidential session, members considered research into passenger compensation schemes and research into incomplete journeys on Oyster and reviewed the meeting.