
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 8 May 2012 at
6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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Present

Members

Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (in the Chair)

Guests

Matt Winfield	Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London (TfL) (from Item 5)
Peter Twigg	Head of London & South East Support, Association of Train Operating Companies

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Susan Parham-McCance	Casework Manager (Items 8-9)

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

Apologies were received from David Barry, the Chair of the meeting, who was unfortunately absent through sickness, and from Sharon Grant. In addition, apologies were received from Lucy Preston from Transport for London.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Consumer Affairs committee held on 14 February 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

It was noted that in relation to Item 5.5, the Communications Officer had looked into the making use of a commercial service to put leaflets into libraries but had found the cost too expensive.

5 Matters arising (CAC030)

5.1 Production of posters giving information on black cab fares

It was noted that the Chief Executive and Director, Policy & Investigation, would be meeting the Managing Director of Gatwick Airport shortly and could raise the issue of publishing information about taxi fares to London at that meeting.

5.2 Posters on London buses

It was noted that new posters were being put on buses at the moment but they would need updating again once London TravelWatch had finished its move to new premises.

5.3 Add the text of the How to Complain leaflet to the website

Sophia Lambert confirmed that she had sent the text to the Communications Officer.

5.4 Department for Transport presentation on ticketless technologies

The Executive Assistant agreed to contact the Department for Transport again about obtaining a copy of the presentation on ticketless technologies.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Actions taken (CAC031)

The Director, Policy & Investigation, reported that a lot of work had been done to improve the functionality of Transport for London ticket vending machines. For example, it would soon be possible to buy an extension ticket from a TfL ticket machine, and the process for buying tickets would be more intuitive and more in line with that used by National Rail machines.

Members considered the position of London Overground, which, although part of the TfL family, continued to use Network Rail ticket machines. This could be confusing for customers but gave greater flexibility in being able to buy a wider range of tickets.

The Director, Policy & Investigation, had attended a meeting of the Office of Rail Regulation's Forum of Consumer Experts. The forum's role was to advise the ORR of passenger-related interests when formulating rail policy.

The Director, Policy & Investigation, had attended a meeting with Greater Anglia to discuss their proposals to allow off-peak day tickets to be used on trains out of London but to make them more expensive and to introduce a new super off-peak, which would be cheaper than the present off-peak but more restricted.

7 Government consultation on rail fares and ticketing (CAC032)

The Director, Policy & Investigation, said that the aims of the government consultation on rail fares and ticketing were to increase simplicity, improve transparency, manage demand on the network, enable and promote ticketless technology and move more of the cost of the network from the government to the passenger.

London TravelWatch, Passenger Focus and the Association of Train Operating Companies and been involved in the drafting of the consultation document from an early stage and the Director, Policy & Investigation, thanked the DfT for this.

In relation to the structure of fares, average fares in London were 20-30% higher than those in other urban areas of the UK. The policy since privatisation of increasing fares following investment meant that some routes into London were significantly higher than others. The government was considering permitting TfL to change fares by more than RPI+1%.

The consultation document noted that a season-ticket holder's peak-hour journey could cost less than on off-peak single ticket for the same journey, which did not assist with managing capacity on the network.

Members noted that some elements of the document were controversial and if implemented would set the tone for many years so it was important to get it right. They agreed that the issue of split ticketing needed addressing as ideally passengers should benefit from buying through tickets rather than finding cheaper alternatives when buying shorter tickets. A member proposed that a system of bulk-buying miles of journeys may be possible and beneficial for passengers.

It was noted that the deadline for responding to the consultation was the end of June and that members would be considering the issues in greater detail in the confidential session.

8 Casework report and update (CAC033)

The Casework Manager said that there had been some IT problems in the previous quarter that had affected performance but the slippages had been recovered to a good degree.

She said that Target 1 showed an increase in the volume of complaints and she was investigating whether there had been an error in reporting this data. She said that the data reported in the previous quarter in Part 2 was corrupted but she was confident that the problem affected only that table. The corrupted data had been amended and a corrected version was included in the report.

In relation to operator response times, the Casework Manager said that TfL buses remained a problem but they were making considerable effort to overcome these difficulties. Rail operators were much improved, in large part because of the good relationships built up between casework staff and their contacts at the rail companies.

Matt Winfield said that TfL was undergoing a staffing restructure and that once that was completed he hoped there would be a single point of contact for caseworkers and that these should go some way towards addressing the problems.

It was agreed that the charts on pages 8-10 were no longer necessary and that in future the focus would be on quality of responses.

Members thanked caseworkers for their excellent performance in the previous quarter.

9 Stakeholder questionnaire report

It was noted that 90% of respondents were satisfied with the way London TravelWatch handled their concerns, which was excellent. The overall response rate was reasonable but it would be helpful if the response rate could be increased. Peter Twigg said that ATOC offered to make a small charitable donation for each questionnaire returned in an effort to improve its response rate.

10 Any other business

It was noted that David Leibling would like to look more closely at fixmytransport.com and its relationship to London TravelWatch and TfL.

Action: Executive Assistant

11 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 the Government consultation on rail fares and ticketing, how complaints are passed between London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus, and the review of the meeting.