
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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Minutes of the Transport Services Committee meeting held on 12 March 2013 at Dexter House, London EC2

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Present

Members

Josephine Channer, Richard Dilks, Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke, Abdikafi Rage, John Stewart (Chair), Ruth Thompson

Guests

Peter Bradley Head of Consultation and Delivery, London Buses, Transport for London (Item 7)
John Barry Head of Network Development, London Buses, Transport for London (Item 7)

Matt Winfield Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London

Members of the public

Secretariat

Keletha Barrett Policy Assistant (Item 9)
Tim Bellenger Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke Chief Executive (from Item 8)
Richard Freeston-Clough Communications Officer
Sharon Malley Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops Policy Officer

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and informed those present about the safety arrangements.

2 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest in addition to those included on the online register.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Transport Services committee held on 11 September 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record. It was noted that the former chair of the Transport Services committee had checked the minutes for accuracy.

5 Matters arising (TRS041)

The Chief Executive reported that she had now attended a meeting with the Minister for Transport in London, although there had been no opportunity to discuss issues of health planning. It was agreed that the issue of health planning would be put into abeyance until the opportunity arose through the reorganisation of health services in specific areas. The chair of London TravelWatch said it had been a useful introductory meeting with the promise of a follow-up in around six months.

The Chief Executive noted that the response from Transport for London on the question of litter bins on trams was not wholly satisfactory but that it would not be worthwhile to spend further time on it at this point.

6 Actions taken (TRS042)

It was noted that the actions taken report now included brief information points about the issues covered at each event. The Chief Executive said that there was a balance to strike over the amount of information to include in the report. Largely the activities were part of officers' everyday work and it would be counterproductive to produce too many detailed public notes of the meetings. However, officers would advise members if any of the actions taken had surprising or controversial outcomes.

7 Community involvement in bus service planning

Peter Bradley, Head of Consultation and Delivery at London Buses, gave a presentation on Transport for London's (TfL) approach to consultation in relation to planning of bus services. He said that TfL put emphasis on two-way dialogue when consulting with the public and aspired to a genuine exchange of information. There was not a single method for engaging the public. Instead, different consultation programmes were devised for different proposals, depending on what was appropriate in each case. For example, some proposals might require paid-for advertising, public exhibitions or interactive elements. Others might require a leaflet drop or an advertisement on specific bus stands.

Mr Bradley said that his role was across the whole of TfL, although Surface Transport, including buses, used consultation programmes most frequently. Consultation was in some cases statutory but was also used to help TfL make better decisions.

The Oyster database was a useful resource in targeting people who might be interested in particular consultations. For example, it was possible to identify people who had used a particular bus route in the previous three months, and then contact them about proposed changes to the route.

John Barry, Head of Network Development at London Buses, gave a presentation on how consultations affected specific routes and services. He said that buses accounted for over 50 percent of the number of trips in London and buses were planned in an integrated, passenger-facing way. It was important, therefore, to understand what passengers wanted from bus services. A considerable amount of research was carried out in this area, and was supplemented by TfL's own operational data.

Of TfL's approximately 650 bus routes, around half were reviewed every year. This was usually as a result of the tendering process but could also be because of operational problems or external changes in demand.

Customer satisfaction scores were measured regularly. These found that passengers consistently rated journey time reliability as the most important factor affecting customer satisfaction.

London Buses aspired to ensure that buses ran within 400 metres of every residential dwelling in the London area, with 94 percent of residents living within a five-minute walk of a bus stop and over 99 percent living within an eight-minute walk.

Work had been undertaken to improve the simplicity of the network so that passengers could be more confident about using bus services. One change was that buses no longer had the same number when serving different destinations on different days. Routes had been standardised as far as possible.

London Buses had made the decision to use its resources to provide shorter but more frequently served routes rather than longer routes that might become delayed and unreliable. Passengers rated good reliability of short routes as more important than unreliable but longer routes, even if it meant interchanging at some point on the journey.

When considering changes to bus routes, TfL would draw up alternative plans and then carried out a cost-benefit analysis to see how many people would benefit from the changes and how many people would be disadvantaged, to check whether the changes would be worthwhile.

London Buses remained aware of the challenges for the future, particularly in supporting population growth and improving air quality.

In response to questions, Mr Barry said that London Buses had a proactive programme for choosing which bus services to review, based on contract tendering timetables, and also had a reactive aspect, which responded to comments from passengers about problems with their services. Services planners would also try to anticipate changes arising from developments such as the Olympic Park, new shopping centres, hospitals, Crossrail and so on.

Mr Bradley said that timetables were sometimes provided in 'corridor' format, to show passengers the range of services that left from a stop. Other stops might not have such high frequency routes or might serve routes going in a number of directions, and so would display the services differently. The aim was always to provide the most useful information possible for passengers.

In response to a question, Mr Bradley said that when trying to reach minority communities in specific areas, TfL would often seek guidance from local authorities on how best to include minority communities in consultations.

The chair of London TravelWatch said that consultations usually necessitated compromises and asked how London Buses framed consultations so that people understood that trade-offs would be likely. Mr Bradley said that when they presented schemes for consultation they tried to ensure that the pros and cons were set out. Consultation responses were not viewed as a referendum and strongly held views by a small number of people could be balanced by moderately held views by a large number of people. In addition, specific responses sometimes put forward solutions that TfL might not have considered, which were useful in themselves.

It was noted that London TravelWatch's role gave it a powerful position when responding to consultations and that London TravelWatch could help balance the difficult question of trade-off.

Mr Bradley said that previously consultations hadn't automatically made use of social media but this might change in future. Campaigning groups were ready to use social media and TfL needed to do the same, in order to ensure that information about proposals in the public domain was accurate and to be in a good position to correct any misinformation that might have gained traction.

It was noted that TfL was working on improving its approach to consultation across all modes, recognising that some modes previously did not have such a strong culture of consultation as Surface Transport.

Members thanked Mr Bradley and Mr Barry for the useful presentation and welcomed the opportunity to review TfL's consultation arrangements.

8 Rail in London report (TRS043)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented his report on rail in London, which had previously been submitted to the Transport Committee for the London Assembly as part of its review of Crossrail and the future of rail in London. He noted that it was important for London TravelWatch to maintain oversight of the various smaller projects that would impact on passengers and not become distracted by the larger projects with higher profiles. As an example, he said that the introduction of gating on the North London Line had recouped its capital outlay in six weeks. The amount of lost revenue on the line had been significantly under-estimated.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said the issues highlighted in the report formed the basis of officers' day to day work and fed through into the business plan.

9 National rail performance report (TRS44)

The Policy Assistant presented London TravelWatch's report on national rail performance for the third quarter of 2012-13. She said that London TravelWatch compiled the report four times a year based on data provided by Network Rail, with analysis focussing on the issues that most affected passengers.

The Policy Assistant said that performance had deteriorated slightly compared to the same quarter last year, with London Overground and c2c having the highest levels of passenger satisfaction and First Capital Connect having the lowest. She set out some of the reasons for changes in performance such as staffing issues, signalling problems and work to improve overhead lines.

It was agreed that it would be useful to see longer-term trends in some areas to understand where any problems were coming from.

Action: Policy Assistant

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the information derived from the performance report often formed the basis of quarterly bilateral meetings with train operating companies. Where particular concerns were raised, members might consider inviting particular operators to attend future Policy committee meetings to respond.

10 Any other business

There was no other business.

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 Transport for London performance report and reviewed the meeting.