
Minutes

Agenda item 5
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 19 March 2013 at Dexter House.

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Dave Ward Route Managing Director, Network Rail (Item 8)

Members of the public

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
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 and visitors to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ruth Thompson.

3 Declarations of interest

The register of members' interests was now available on the London TravelWatch website. There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

The Chair said that he was continuing his programme of introductory meetings with stakeholders, including the Office of Rail Regulation, Transport for London, various train operating companies, the Greater London Authority, the Department for Transport and a range of public interest groups. He intended to produce a brief note when the introductory meetings were completed to pull together the relevant points for comments and review.

He said that with the Chief Executive and Director, Policy and Investigation, he had attended a useful meeting with Stephen Hammond MP, the minister for transport with a London remit, and had raised the issue of rail devolution. It was agreed at the meeting that, in future, London Travelwatch should see the Minister every six months or so.

The Chair said he would be attending a meeting with London Assembly Transport Committee leads the following day to discuss respective workplans.

He said that he had attended a meeting of the Passenger Focus board where the main issue for discussion was the Brown review of rail franchising, with emphasis on the passenger aspects of the report. Passenger Focus members also considered the January fare rises, the bus passenger survey, the possibility of making its research data more available for use by external organisations, and smart ticketing.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29 January 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record. The minutes of the Governance committee of 27 November 2012 were noted.

The Policy Officer said that there would be a further stakeholder event as part of TfL's Roads Task Force and that the Task Force was due to report in May, with TfL responding to the report after that. London TravelWatch should seek to influence TfL's response and should maintain contact with the former Deputy Chair, who continued to act as London TravelWatch's member level link in this area.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Matters arising (LTW427)

6.1 Members' induction visits

It was noted that officers were in the process of organising visits for members as part of their induction programme and details would be circulated separately.

6.2 Good practice guide for timetable changes

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that one of the 2012 Games legacies was an increased flexibility from transport operators in responding to temporary and late-notice events by changing their timetables. He was working with Passenger Focus on the development of a good practice guide to formalise this approach and would discuss it with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) before bringing it to the Policy committee in due course.

7 Actions taken (LTW424)

It was noted that Network Rail would be carrying out extensive works at Reading station over the Easter period and that this would result in an extensive blockade in the area, with significant implications for travellers to and from Paddington and within the London area.

8 Interchanges and infrastructure works

The Policy Officer, Vincent Stops, gave a short presentation on London TravelWatch's work to date on interchanges. London TravelWatch's 2011 Interchange and Walking report had investigated five interchanges as case studies, which had informed its view on the requirements of good interchanges. Paddington remained a notably poor interchange, with inadequate information for passengers about continuing their journey and a lack of accessibility to the local environment.

The Policy Officer said that London TravelWatch had looked at interchange accessibility in the run up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games and had welcomed the use of 'one team transport', where staff offered multi-modal travel advice and stations were under single management.

London TravelWatch had aspirations for national rail stations including more information for passengers on how to continue their journeys, an acceptance that passengers' needs extended beyond station boundaries and the adoption of the one team transport approach. It was noted that London Bridge and Victoria were both undergoing significant construction work and much more should be done to benefit passengers in and around these stations.

Dave Ward, Route Managing Director at Network Rail, gave a presentation on Network Rail's work on improving interchanges. He said that the work completed recently at Kings Cross station demonstrated what could be achieved in improving the design of stations and interchanges. The new station at Blackfriars also now increased integration between modes and was fully accessible.

Mr Ward said that the redevelopment at London Bridge was equivalent in size to building two Wembley Stadiums while hosting three international matches every day. Network Rail was working closely with all transport operators to learn the lessons from the Olympics at London Bridge. The station was a major transport hub and needed clear and consistent signage. Mr Ward was also looking at travel demand management to minimise the disruption passengers would experience during periods when there would be significantly limited capacity. This would need careful communication, and a campaign was planned for the summer.

Mr Ward said that Network Rail was working with senior staff at Transport for London to build on the one team transport work that took place during the Olympic Games. He said that the Overground extension involved both Network Rail and TfL infrastructure but the passenger experience was seamless. In addition, he worked with the Greater London Authority and the London boroughs on issues such as accessibility.

Mr Ward said that Paddington station presented challenges owing to its listed architecture and English Heritage's strong views on the extent to which it could be reconfigured. Network Rail had hoped to overhaul signage at the station but had been prevented from doing so.

Looking ahead, Mr Ward said that in the period 2014-19 Network Rail planned to complete Thameslink and Crossrail works and also electrify the Great Western route, alongside several smaller projects. Overall there had been significant reductions in the cost of running the railway while the number of passengers continued to increase.

In response to questions from members, Mr Ward said that each Managing Director on in his team took on responsibility for building links with local authorities to maximise funding opportunities. He agreed that Network Rail could do more to simplify its own corporate branding to improve the joining up of journeys. The walking route between St Pancras and Euston was much improved but the signage was still not adequate.

The Chief Executive said that London TravelWatch had done a lot of work to help improve the user experience at Paddington station, including bringing together various stakeholders to encourage more constructive dialogue between them. She said there was still a way to go in this area, especially on work that could be completed without English Heritage approval.

A member highlighted the importance of smaller projects such as the electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line. Mr Ward said that if electrification took place TfL London Rail would need to replace the current fleet of trains used on the route and Network Rail would need to consider other improvements to infrastructure, such as embankments and viaducts, to enable growth of freight on the route.

In response to a question on resilience in winter weather, Mr Ward noted that Network Rail's performance had been reasonable for the conditions. Network Rail had worked on improving the resilience of trains so that they would not fail in poor weather. Two years ago there had been over 200 incidents of trains losing all power due to poor weather, whereas this winter there had been one. There was a new fleet of snow and ice trains to support the existing stock. This would be increased again for next winter. In addition, Network Rail was working on changing the compounds of rails so that snow would be less able to stick to them.

Mr Ward said that Network Rail sought to build alliances with partners in relation to station interchanges and was moving more towards a holistic approach, seeing stations in the same way that passengers saw them. The Chair said that interchanges was an area in which London TravelWatch, with its multi-modal remit, hoped to add significant value.

A member raised concern about inadequate signage at London Bridge and Victoria stations during the ongoing construction works. Mr Ward said that the works at Victoria were very dynamic and pedestrian routes changed frequently, which meant that it would not be efficient to invest in expensive, permanent signage. Network Rail was working very hard to ensure that signage at London Bridge station was clear.

Members thanked Mr Ward for his presentation and noted their continued support for increased integration at stations for the benefit of passengers.

9 Future governance arrangements and meeting dates (LTW429)

The Chief Executive presented the report on proposed future governance arrangements and the table of revised meeting dates. It was noted that the terms of reference of the Policy committee were less detailed than those of the committees it replaced. This was because previously it had been important to specify the particular roles of each committee, but with the move to a single Policy committee, this need was less.

The recommendations in the report were agreed, subject to some minor changes and clarifications in the terms of reference.

10 Appointment of subsidiary bodies (LTW430)

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

11 Any other business

There was no other business.

12 Resolution to move into confidential session

It was resolved, under section 15(2)(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the item(s) to be discussed, it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded for a section of the meeting.

During the confidential session, members considered research on passenger purchase and sales experiences, noted work on passenger priorities on London Underground, and reviewed the meeting.