
Minutes

Agenda item 4
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 29 January 2013 at City Hall

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Vernon Everitt	Managing Director of Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications, Transport for London (Item 10)
Shashi Verma	Director of Customer Experience, Transport for London (Item 10)
Leon Daniels	Managing Director of Surface Transport, Transport for London (Item 11)

Members of the public

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer (Items 8 to 11)

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members to their first meeting of the Board of London TravelWatch.

It was agreed that the list of forthcoming meeting dates would be circulated again for members to indicate their availability and a definitive list of meetings for 2013 would be finalised.

Action: Executive Assistant

It was agreed that members would like to visit venues such as the Transport for London (TfL) control centre, relevant local train operating companies' control centres or the Network Rail centre at East Croydon as part of their induction programme.

Action: Executive Assistant

The Chair noted that as the consultation process with the Department for Transport was not yet complete, Board appointments had not yet been formally approved. The meeting was therefore of a provisional nature.

The Chair gave information to attendees about fire and safety.

2 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

3 Declarations of interest

All members had been asked to make a written standing declaration of interests that would be made available on the London TravelWatch website. Those who had not yet completed their written declarations were asked to do so as soon as possible. No additional declarations were made for the meeting.

Action: Members

4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

The Chair reported on his activities since taking on the role of Chair. He said he had met a large number of stakeholders, including operators and consumer groups, with more scheduled for the future. He had also attended a useful induction session with other members on 14 January.

The Chair said that he had been appointed to the Board of Passenger Focus and had attended one meeting, which had focused on the Brown review of rail franchising. The meeting had also considered ticketing, including smart ticketing, and had considered whether more could be done to link passenger satisfaction measures to the train environment and the quality of the rolling stock, as well as punctuality and other more traditional measures.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27 November 2012 had been agreed and signed as a correct record at the meeting of the Transport Services committee on 11 December 2012.

Re Item 4: It was noted that David Leibling had been appointed to the Mayor of London's Roads Taskforce in a personal capacity and would continue to attend on London TravelWatch's behalf, alongside London TravelWatch's Policy Officer. The terms of reference of this task force means that its work is time limited and it is expected to report to the Mayor in the first half of 2013.

Re Item 5: The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that Department for Transport (DfT) had agreed that it would be useful for London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus to develop a good practice guide to simplify the mechanism for making temporary timetable changes. However, it had declined to fund the development of the guide. London TravelWatch would discuss this further with Passenger Focus and the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC).

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

Re Item 8: It was noted that the Policy Officer had responded to the Transport for London (TfL) consultation about river crossings and had stressed the need for infrastructure at each end of the crossings to be compatible with the volume of traffic expected. It was agreed that the response would be circulated to members for their information and that this was an issue to keep under review.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Matters arising (LTW423)

6.1 Redress following accidents on TfL routes

The Policy Officer said that Dana Skelley of Transport for London had previously reported to the Board on the general issue of roads maintenance and that this action should now be regarded as complete.

7 Actions taken (LTW424)

The report on meetings attended by officers was noted. It was agreed that future reports would include brief notes on the issues discussed.

Action: Executive Assistant

8 Appointment of subsidiary bodies (LTW425)

Members noted that the Board was required to review its subsidiary bodies annually. It was agreed that the current structure should be maintained until the beginning of April, after which time the Consumer Affairs committee and the Transport Services committee should be merged into a single Policy Committee, which should enable members and staff to focus closely on the needs of the travelling public. It was agreed that John Stewart should chair the final Consumer Affairs and Transport Services committees and the Policy committee thereafter.

It was agreed that the Governance committee should continue to meet and that Ruth Thompson should be its chair. It was agreed that all members should sit on both the Governance and the Policy committees.

It was noted that the Transport Committee of the London Assembly had previously accepted a nomination from members for the role of Deputy Chair. It was agreed that approval should be sought from the Transport Committee of the Assembly for Ruth Thompson to be appointed as Deputy Chair.

9 Rail franchising (LTW426)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented his report on the Brown review of rail franchising. He said that the review went further than the original remit and could be described as fairly radical. It contained an unexpected level of criticism of the Department for Transport (DfT), which meant that not all of its recommendations may be accepted or implemented in full.

He said that there were reasons for optimism, especially in relation to the recommendations set out in paragraph 3.2 of the London TravelWatch report. He was particularly pleased to see the recommendation that the weighting given to passenger benefits in future franchises should be increased from 20% to 40%.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, welcomed the suggested increase in sample size for the National Passenger Survey, which could see the 25% of London stations that had never been surveyed included in future. This was important as the number of passengers using smaller London stations was often underestimated in official figures because of previous non-inclusion of Freedom Pass usage and the use of diaries to estimate Travelcard usage.

Members endorsed the report, highlighting the benefits of greater devolution of rail to the Mayor of London, putting renewed focus on smaller stations and gaining greater flexibility in franchises.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that splitting franchises into periods of around seven to 10 years, with the possibility of extensions, would most likely give all parties greater confidence in forecasting.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that there was likely to be some cultural resistance to some of the recommendations within the DfT, and London TravelWatch's role was to maintain pressure to see them implemented. It was noted that London TravelWatch had good contacts with the DfT and was in a strong position to push for the implementation of the recommendations. Members asked officers to take every opportunity to push for this.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

10 Customer services at Transport for London

Vernon Everitt, Managing Director of Customer Experience, Marketing and Communications at TfL, and Shashi Verma, Director of Customer Experience at TfL, gave a presentation on how customer service at TfL was being improved.

Mr Everitt said that TfL aimed to have customer services standards as high as at top-name retailers such as Amazon, Apple or John Lewis. He said that TfL needed to do more to publicise the rights offered to their customers and to focus on joining up

journeys and offering consistency across journeys. He said that 65% of all email enquiries were now dealt with in 24 hours.

Mr Everitt said that TfL was proposing to alter the London Underground charter refund policy in 2013. This would mean that delays of 30 minutes would be refunded automatically onto Oyster cards rather than requiring passengers to apply for refunds following delays of 15 minutes.

He said that TfL was moving towards the introduction of a single contact number for customer enquiries. This would reduce levels of frustration and confusion for customers. In addition, TfL would move to a low-rate telephone number so that enquiries would be cheaper for customers.

Mr Everitt said that Oyster Online had been improved so that customers could now resolve incomplete journeys by logging into their account and fixing them themselves. At the moment 1,000 people per day were taking advantage of this.

He said that TfL had opened its data feeds to app developers and lots of the apps now available on the market were driven by TfL feeds.

Work was being carried out on the TfL website to make it more personal to the user and to improve Journey Planner. The website now had around 10 million visitors per month.

Mr Verma said that London was the only city in the world to be using contactless bank cards as payment for transport. At the moment there were around 9,000 contactless transactions per day on buses. Bus payments were more straightforward than other payments as they did not require the passenger to touch out at the end of the journey. In the longer term TfL was planning to extend the contactless system to Pay As You Go on all modes and also to load travelcards onto bank cards.

In response to questions, Mr Verma said that TfL would be putting a complaints guide on the front page of its website to make it easier for customers to navigate their way through the complaints process. The aim was that customers would not need to know about the range of contractors and organisations associated with TfL, but instead would have their complaint handled directly by a single TfL contact.

Mr Everitt said that although some passengers disliked the number of announcements on buses and tube trains, the majority of feedback was that passengers liked the security and confidence provided by the announcements.

He said that he was aware that not all passengers had access to internet-based information and TfL would continue to provide leaflets, maintain staffing levels and undertake media relations work to try and reach as many customers as possible.

It was noted that it would be useful for members to know more about TfL's research programme and that this could be the subject of a future presentation.

Action: Executive Assistant

The Chair thanked Mr Everitt and Mr Verma for their very interesting and informative presentation.

11 Overview of surface transport

Leon Daniels, Managing Director of Surface Transport at Transport for London, gave a presentation on the issues currently facing the directorate. He said that work was underway on active management of the highway to maximise capacity where possible. There was also a focus on supporting the increase in cycling in London.

A lot of focus was currently on freight and the way the freight industry used the road network. There was a recognition that in the past freight had probably not had the attention paid to it that it deserved. Work was being carried out to ease freight movements, down to the operational hours and positions of individual loading bays. TfL was continuing its freight forums and trying to reduce bureaucracy. It was also important to include the non-regulated industry such as white vans when considering freight.

Mr Daniels said that there may in future be an increased demand for Dial-a-Ride services as funding for alternative specialist transport options fell away.

He said that TfL's internal organisational structures did not always chime in with the way customers expected and that customers did not expect there to be different divisions within the organisation for different modes. TfL was working towards improved integration across its internal departments.

In response to questions, Mr Daniels said that freight operated on a permit system and that during the Games a special version of the scheme had been introduced to allow more night-time deliveries. In most cases this had led to very few additional complaints and benefits had outweighed the disadvantages. This was in large part due to technical advances made by the freight industry.

Mr Daniels said that Dial-a-Ride remained very important for many people. He had looked at the way similar systems operated in other parts of the country and found that sometimes callers were speaking to sympathetic operators who were able to batch their journeys more efficiently. It was important to carry more people without increasing cost but this did not always mean improved computer systems. It was agreed that members should be updated on this in the future.

Action: Executive Assistant

Mr Daniels said that London could face a substantial fine for breaching acceptable levels of air quality. All decisions about transport in London included reference to the impact on air quality.

Mr Daniels said that TfL was trying to actively manage works in the TfL road network, including facilitating liaison between contractors and utilities when they wanted to dig up the highway. TfL also operated a lane rental scheme.

Mr Daniels said there would be no change to the current arrangement of Countdown signs at bus stops. There was no funding to introduce more signs or to move existing ones.

Mr Daniels said that TfL had been very happy with the New Bus for London (NBFL) pilot and had recently announced that route 24 would be converted to NBFL buses. It would be important for operators to ensure that conductors were customer-focused.

Members thanked Mr Daniels for the thoughtful presentation and noted that some issues would be revisited in the future for more detailed consideration.

12 Any other business

There was no other business.

13 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 reviewed the meeting.