
Minutes

Agenda item 5
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7 May 2013 at Dexter House.

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Mike Keegan Transport Strategy Director, Transport for London (Item 8)
David Leibling (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 Richard Dilks.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest other than those published on the London TravelWatch website.

4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

The Chair said that Passenger Focus had not held any board meetings since he had last reported to members, although it had held an induction day for its new members. It had been a useful opportunity to learn more about the organisation, its staff and projects, and to meet new Passenger Focus board members.

The Chair reported that he was continuing his programme of introductory meetings with stakeholders, with the London Cycling Campaign and Network Rail meetings remaining outstanding. He was working on a brief note to capture the relevant points arising from his induction meetings.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

In respect of Item 8, the Chief Executive said that she was encouraged to see Network Rail and the train operating companies (TOCs) liaising more closely on a formal basis for the benefit of passengers and this was perhaps one of the best legacies of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In respect of Item 9, the Chair noted that the first meeting of the Policy committee had taken place on 23 April where a useful debate on cycling had taken place. The first meeting of the Chairs' Group had also been held, on 16 April, and had reviewed forthcoming agenda items to ensure the business of the organisation was being consistently handled.

Officers were developing a set of prioritisation criteria to help assess which workstreams should take precedence given limited resources. A report on this would go to the next Governance committee.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Matters arising (LTW4432)

In respect of Item 2, the good practice guide for timetable changes, the Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he was attending a meeting on this issue following the meeting.

7 Actions taken (LTW433)

The Chair reported on the meetings he had attended, including a useful meeting with London Assembly members, at which there had been an opportunity to align work programmes, particularly in relation to buses. The Chief Executive said that a follow-up meeting had now taken place.

The Chair said that his meeting with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) had been a helpful introduction to their work and that his meeting with Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport, had also gone well.

The Chair said the meeting with Kate Hoey MP and the local transport campaigner had been positive and he hoped that London TravelWatch would be able to take the relationship forward from a clean start.

8 Roads Task Force update

The Policy Officer Vincent Stops said that addressing congestion was one of London TravelWatch's key transport priorities and he welcomed the formation of the Roads Task Force to look in detail at the management of road space. He presented a brief report on London TravelWatch's response to the initial Roads Task Force consultation, which had been submitted in September 2012. He said that London TravelWatch's former Deputy Chair, David Leibling, had been appointed to the Task Force in a personal capacity and remained the link between the Task Force and the organisation.

Mike Keegan, Transport Strategy Manager at Transport for London, gave a presentation on the work of the Task Force to date and proposals for the future. He said London's predicted population growth was so significant that even if the entire of the Mayor's transport strategy was implemented, including those items currently unfunded, congestion on the roads would still increase. The Task Force had been established to look into this problem, for the benefit of all road users, including car drivers, bus users, cyclists and others.

He said that roads were central to the Mayor's transport vision and that roads were used in different ways in different parts of London and performed different functions such as high streets and arterial roads. The Task Force had considered the implications of increasing the allocation of space for the public realm, walking and cycling, and found that in the absence of mitigating measures for other movement, this would result in unacceptable increases in congestion.

To address this, the Task Force looked at tools to reduce congestion with a focus on demand management and the provision of greater space for roads. Demand would be managed through measures such as parking and access restrictions.

The Task Force was calling for a much greater integration between road planning and city planning and more co-ordination between TfL and the boroughs. Work needed to be carried out to develop tools to address unacceptable impacts on congestion. Mr Keegan said the Task Force intended to publish its report in July, accompanied by a response from TfL.

A member said he welcomed the move away from building new roads as the default solution to congestion problems but wondered how aspirations could be realised without the introduction of some form of road pricing. He said that for London TravelWatch, bus priority was important and as the population grew there was a need to maintain and even enhance existing provision.

In response to a question, Mr Keegan said that the population growth assumptions had been derived from the London Plan, the pan-London urban planning document.

Census data showed that the population growth of central London was even higher than had been initially predicted.

A member noted that some modes of transport, such as buses, made better, more efficient use of road space than others, such as taxis, and would like to see this reflected in the final report. The Policy Officer said he would respond again to Mr Keegan on this issue.

In response to a question, Mr Keegan said that the responses to the consultation had been varied and revealed how different stakeholders wanted more from roads. He said a common theme was for TfL to harness the work done for the Olympic and Paralympic Games on issues such as out of hours deliveries.

It was noted that although London TravelWatch's remit did not extend to freight, freight transport was important as it used resources that might otherwise be available for the movement of people. It was noted that there seemed to be an increase in the use of light vans on the road, which might be caused by increases in outsourcing maintenance contracts. There may be some potential to improve efficiency in this area.

It was agreed that it was important to look at issues as creatively as possible and that, for example, integrating cycling facilities in new developments might encourage new residents to cycle when they moved in.

David Leibling, the former Deputy Chair of London TravelWatch and a member of the Roads Task Force, said that bus priority was not necessarily in conflict with car ownership but it was important to recognise that in outer London especially private car use was very important.

Mr Leibling said he hoped to see the good example of Henly's Corner adopted across London. He said that the upgrade of Bond Street station cost one hundred times more than Henly's Corner but benefitted the same number of people. He hoped the Roads Task Force report would identify specific locations where road improvements could be made.

It was noted that increasing road space, as at Henly's Corner, might result in increased levels of traffic rather than reduced levels of congestion. Mr Keegan said he thought the Task Force would probably look to travel demand management as a way of reducing congestion.

Mr Keegan said that the publication of the report would be the start of the process and he expected that he would continue to report on progress with implementation for some time. The Chair thanked him for attending and responding to questions.

Members were very impressed with the quality and rigour of the analysis of the Task Force to date and noted that there were some stark choices to be faced which would have significant implications for all who travelled in London. Members agreed that doing nothing was clearly not an option, given the prospects for increased congestion in an already congested city. It was clearly right therefore to examine a mix of capacity enhancing and demand management solutions. However, where demand management measures were being considered, it was vital that active measures were taken to build public and community support.

9 Working with local community groups (LTW434)

The Communications Officer presented his report on how London TravelWatch worked with local community groups. He said that the organisation had a long history of meeting and talking to local groups and had also held its own events in London to meet transport users who might otherwise not be heard. He said the landscape for community engagement was changing and reduced resources meant it was harder to attend individual local meetings. At the same time, social media enabled organisations like London TravelWatch to reach a different audience than previously.

It was noted that stakeholder engagement events did not result in statistically significant sample sizes and that engagement should be strategically driven. It should aim to be inclusive and so should consider using non-traditional networks, such as churches or mother and baby groups.

It was noted that the overall objective of community engagement needed to be more clear. The stakeholder engagement events were useful for case studies but were not rigorous enough to form part of an evidence base. It may be more useful to organise central events that all transport user groups could be invited to attend, rather than trying to meet each group individually.

It was agreed that a useful outcome of community engagement work would be to encourage TfL to work more closely with local groups.

Members noted that they could potentially learn a good deal from local community groups and their experiences, provided this was done selectively. Some local groups had an excellent record of understanding and articulating community concerns, and of contributing to their resolution. In addition, from the perspective of many groups, London TravelWatch was a key conduit into TfL, because they did not necessarily find it easy to communicate with TfL directly.

Members agreed that they would welcome evidence of how community engagement work contributed to London TravelWatch's objectives in a cost-efficient way. Further work needed to be carried out on the costs and benefits involved. This should be completed once London TravelWatch's prioritisation criteria had been established.

Action: Communications Officer

Members felt some scepticism about the value of local engagement events, and the Board felt that these needed to be analysed in the more rigorous prioritisation framework now being prepared. It was, however, agreed that the two events budgeted for 2013-14 be completed, provided they were structured in such a way as to maximise learning and future resource planning.

Action: Communications Officer

10 Any other business

There was no other business.

11 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 the impact on passengers of further rail devolution, and reviewed the meeting.