
Confidential Minutes

Agenda item: 18
Drafted: 29.04.14

Confidential minutes of the Policy committee held on 15 April 2014 at Dexter House, Royal Mint Court, London EC3

These minutes are in addition to the public minutes of a meeting of the Committee on the same date. In that meeting 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 this part of the meeting.

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Lucy Preston	Travel Products Manager, Transport for London (Item 3)
Matt Winfield	Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London (item 3)
Rebecca Hall	Rail Fares and Ticketing Manager, Department for Transport (item 3)
Michael Dollin	SEFT Project Manager, Department for Transport (item 3)
James Carr	Incoming Head of London Support, Association of Train Operating Companies (item 3)
Peter Twigg	Outgoing Head of London Support, Association of Train Operating Companies (item 3)
Andy Wakeford	Head of Fares and Retail Support, Association of Train Operating Companies (item 3)

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Research & Development
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Susan James	Casework Manager
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Angela Okello	Policy Officer
Robert Nichols	Policy Officer

Minutes

1 Confidential minutes, declarations of interest and matters arising

The confidential minutes of the Policy committee held on 10 December 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising or additional declarations of interest.

2 London Underground vision for the Tube

The Policy Officers updated members on two new items in London Underground's vision for the Tube. They said that the vision included running a skeleton 24-hour tube on key sections of the network and also a proposal to close all ticket offices and move staff into passenger-facing roles.

The officers said that their research showed that response to multifunctional and visible staff was positive; they felt that the core principle was good when this was done right and in quieter stations. However, ticket office staff were required to carry out more complicated transactions e.g. refunds.

The officers said TfL had put all stations into four main categories – gateway stations, destination stations, metro stations and local stations. They explained how TfL had defined these stations and said that they had visited a few stations to test whether TfL's assessment of these stations was accurate.

The officers said that they were concerned that it seemed that the ticket offices which were being closed were being turned into shopping outlets almost immediately, which meant that there would be no opportunity for the ticket officers to return if a need were established in the future. Also, they felt that some of the stations had been wrongly categorised. The officers said they would prepare a snagging list of things the new system would not cover, for example, what would happen if the only member of staff designated to work at a particular station was not present.

The Chief Executive said work on this would continue behind the scenes until 3 June when the information went public.

The Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Investigation said they were concerned about reduction in levels of functionality on Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) compared to what was initially promised, for instance that passengers would not be able to purchase tickets for advance travel. They said that the TVMs would not fully replace transactions that staff currently did.

Members commented that the conversion of ticket offices to shops seemed rushed. They also noted that if a station had two exits and only one member of staff, it could mean that a gate may need to be closed. They questioned whether the categories for stations were fit for purpose and asked for this to be looked at.

The Chair thanked the Policy Officers and asked them to do further work on this and come back to members at the next Board meeting with as much information from TfL as possible, so that members could develop a position statement. In the meantime, they asked for calls regarding these changes to be recorded on the complaint database to capture the view of passengers.

Action: Policy Officers/Casework Manager

3 Fares and ticketing

The Chair welcomed all the guests to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, introduced this item providing members with a general update on developments with refunds and compensation, the resolution of

ticket issues at Farringdon station and London Terminals, the South East Flexible Ticketing (SEFT) project, a recent visit to Cubic Transportation with the Chief Executive and TfL to see the proposed upgrades to London Underground ticket vending machines and to view the prototype new machines for London Underground and London Tramlink, and some items for discussion under fares and ticketing.

The Chair introduced Rebecca Hall, Rail Fares and Ticketing Manager from TfL. She said that since the fares and ticketing review was published last year it had been noted that there was some perception of unfairness where passengers may wish to mix their tickets and they have looked at rolling out single led pricing with off peak return fares corresponding to single fares. Trials were due to take place in January 2015 and train operating companies (TOCs) had been asked for feedback and some interest had been received. The aim of the trials was to understand the impact on both passengers and TOCs and to measure these impacts, for example whether they would have a positive or negative impact on TOCs and how this would look across the country. The idea would be to look at the routes where the trials were taking place, collect the data and see whether there should be a policy discussion on this. She said that the trials could take up to two years.

Ms Hall said that there had been a reduction of flexibility to 2% of annual Retail Price Index (RPI) in this year's fares. There had been a freeze of the average ratio of inflation for this year and that they were working with ATOC to understand possible future fare changes.

Ms Hall informed members that future changes to ticket office opening hours would be written into franchise agreements to specify what TOCs were planning to do to improve ticket office services and elements around it. She said this would be included in the new arrangements for Trans Penine Express (TPE) and Northern and could be included in other franchise agreements retrospectively.

Meetings had been held about the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) Code of Practice retail review and stakeholder engagement would commence in the summer. The call for evidence for the ORR retail review had received a good response and a stakeholder workshop on this was being planned for May 2015.

The Chair introduced Michael Dollin, SEFT Project Manager from the DfT, to update members on the SEFT project. He said it was a £45 million programme to extend ticket services to suburban areas. He explained that the original budget had not been able to deliver the full package. SEFT would now be prioritised to deliver three outcomes including season tickets, enabling the use of contactless payment and governance of these latter two elements. This meant that some services could not be provided.

Mr Dollin said that the valuation process was underway with TOCs at the moment. Phase 1 of the project would be going to the DfT's internal governance meeting after which a pilot will be tested to see how robust this would be.

Peter Twigg, outgoing Head of London Support from ATOC, said that the project had been through a number of changes and he welcomed the certainty which the phased projects provided and the opportunity to test the pilot to see what passengers wanted. He said he was interested in the route to be used for the trial and how things would be handled in London.

Stephen Locke asked whether they had looked at the experiences outside London or abroad. Mr Dollin said they had done this already and the trial would focus on season ticket holders because they tended to be people who knew the railway well.

The Chief Executive asked what London TravelWatch might expect as an outcome once the project had gone to internal governance. Mr Dollin said that overall the business case was positive, though it was not straightforward for all tickets and the focus will be on season tickets.

Stephen Locke asked whether passengers' understanding of the changes would be tested. Mr Dollin said that this was one of the key conditions for this project.

Richard Dilks asked what single led pricing was and whether TOCs were free to set this. Ms Hall said that passengers would purchase two single tickets which would effectively be a return ticket. She said single led pricing already existed in London in the case of Oyster.

Stephen Locke asked whether the reduced flexibility would make it difficult to put anomalies right. Ms Hall said they were keen for this to be resolved especially as it disadvantaged passengers. She said the merger of TOCs could create anomalies and they were urged to come up with ideas to reduce them.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he would be interested to know whether the review would allow some of the small scale extensions to Oyster to happen, for example around Dartford and Surrey. Mr Dollin said that this would not happen directly but would progress separately and in parallel with the review.

Ruth Thompson said that the ability to pay with an Oyster card was not flagged up on the National Rail enquiries website in large print from a passenger point of view. Peter Twigg, Outgoing Head of London Support from ATOC said he accepted that the Oyster banner was difficult to read and that there had been some technical issues with it. He said the Oyster option would be highlighted in a matter of weeks.

TfL were asked whether there was any update on the 3-day travelcard. Lucy Preston, Travel Products Manager from TfL, said that they were looking at how to provide a flexible approach but it would not be a travelcard of non-consecutive days.

The Chair thanked all the guests for coming to the meeting and in particular Mr Twigg as it was his last meeting. The Chair wished him all the best for his retirement.

4 Meeting review

Members noted that the discussions had been useful and meaningful. They were pleased to have had the private discussion on fares and ticketing with the various guests.

There did not appear to be any areas of reputational risk for London TravelWatch and no specific media opportunities were identified as arising from the meeting.