
Minutes

Agenda item: 5
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Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 12 June 2018

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Present

Members

Jackie Ballard, Alan Benson, Glyn Kyle, Arthur Leathley (AL), Abdi Osman, John Stewart (Chair)

In attendance

Mark Wild Managing Director of London Underground (Item 8)

Secretariat

Keletha Barrett	Policy Officer
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Gytha Chinweze	Governance Officer
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Operations and Communications Manager
Susan James	Casework Manager
Luke Muskett	Committee and Public Liaison Officer
Robert Nichols	Policy Officer

Minutes

1 **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

Apologies for absence had been received from Richard Dilks.

There were no declarations of interest in addition to the standing declarations available on London TravelWatch's website.

2 **Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Policy Committee of 20 March 2018 were amended. The word 'East' was removed from 'East Nunhead' on the final line of the second to last paragraph on page 3. The words 'not all' were added prior to the words 'the apps are not real-time' on line 20 of page 9. The Chair signed the amended minutes as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising (PC135)**

The Chief Executive remarked that Mark Evers had responded to item 1 with the information requested by London TravelWatch. The Director, Policy and Investigation commented on item 3, stating the Policy Officer (VS) had attended additional bus stations since the previous Policy Committee in March. A report would be circulated to members in the near future for their feedback and input.

5 **Key activities (PC136)**

AL stated that his meeting at the City of London was the start of a process to mirror the Mayor's Transport Strategy. The Policy Officer (VS) had briefed him prior to the meeting taking place.

The Chair asked how the meeting had gone between the Transport Committee members Keith Prince AM and Caroline Pidgeon AM. AL replied that the business plan had been received positively and a good discussion had taken place. Caroline Pidgeon had since been appointed to the Chair of the Committee with Florence Eshalomi taking over as Deputy Chair.

AL commented that he had not attended the meeting on 27 April with Ian Hanson of Network Rail.

The Chair asked why the Greenford Branch had been brought up for discussion with Jane Jones on 14 May. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that the reason it had been brought up had been due to the fact that it was the only remaining set of stations controlled by Great Western Railway in our area as the

rest had since come under the control of MTR Crossrail. As such it was an 'island' which without careful monitoring could become neglected. Services no longer operated between Greenford and Paddington with passengers required instead to change train at West Ealing. The overall conditions of the stations were also in need of attention. The Chair suggested, therefore, that it was a situation that London TravelWatch should keep its attention on. The Director, Policy and Investigation agreed.

The Board asked whether the new ticket vending machines, with a new help button and video facilities, had been introduced by Greater Anglia. The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that they were in the process of being installed. The machines had been something that London TravelWatch had helped develop over 10 years previously, and it was positive to see them beginning to appear at stations.

6 Presentation by Mark Wild, Managing Director of London Underground

Mark Wild, Managing Director of London Underground, gave a presentation on the action plan that had been developed following London TravelWatch's review into Tube ticket office closures, the Tube upgrade programme, Bank Station upgrades and the Croyley link.

Mr Wild stated that following London TravelWatch's review TfL had recruited an additional 325 members of staff. There had been a significant increase in the use of mystery shoppers in order to improve customer service, and the issue of last minute ticket office closures had been eradicated.

Mr Wild commented that a lot of work had been instigated with regards to staff visibility: a key component of London TravelWatch's review. A new uniform was due to be introduced, which could also be used as a safety jacket when worn inside out. Staff would also be asked to wear a red tabard with the words, 'here to help', displayed prominently, in order to promote the visibility of staff at stations.

Mr Wild commented that 17 help points would begin to be rolled out at stations across London, the locations of which could be shared following the meeting. In addition, 56 stations would be receiving new stickers to improve the visibility of ticket machines. Mr Wild remarked that it was predicted that the improved visibility of the machines would see a big uptake in their use, and it had been largely thanks to London TravelWatch's work for highlighting the problem to TfL.

Mr Wild stated that the organisation was in the process of closing the final London Underground run ticket office on Network Rail infrastructure at Harlesden. However, this was dependent on Network Rail strengthening a floor to take the weight of a replacement ticket vending machine.

Mr Wild mentioned that a number of recommendations from the London TravelWatch review had been trialled. The hearing loop accessibility had not worked well, with customers relaying to staff that they preferred a text-based method instead. Mr Wild commented that their 'turn up and go' accessibility training had been refreshed and was being rolled out to staff.

Overall, Mr Wild stated that the London TravelWatch review had been highly constructive and that it would be beneficial to do a post-implementation review either in the winter or early in 2019, which could then be taken to TfL's board.

Mr Wild remarked that Tube performance remained relatively strong. One particularly sensitive area that was responsible for a significant proportion of delays and cancellations was the increase in rates of suicide attempts made on the Underground. Mr Wild commented that rates of suicide on the Tube had been double that of the previous year and were bucking the national trend, which was seeing rates fall. TfL staff would be put through Samaritan training with a particular emphasis placed on intervention. The other major issue on the network revolved around problems with the Central Line fleet, which had been responsible for 60-70% of unreliability on the Tube.

Mr Wild stated that the Four Lines' Modernisation Programme was going well, with the first automatic train between Hammersmith and Edgware Road due to launch imminently. A new central command centre had been built and staff had transitioned to the new premises. In addition, a full 192 new trains had been delivered to specification. Mr Wild commented that work was currently one year ahead of schedule, and was due to be completed within three years.

One major health and safety risk, Mr Wild explained, remained the gap between train and platform. It had been positive to see a 20% reduction in the number of incidents involving the gap, though more needed to be done. It remained the railway industry's single biggest risk alongside level-crossings, naturally.

Mr Wild stated that 94 new trains had been ordered to run on the deep tube, and would be the first deep tube trains anywhere in the world to be completely walkthrough and have full air-conditioning. Works on the Piccadilly line would begin in 2024 and be completed by 2028. Although funding was yet to be secured, the Bakerloo line was planned to begin works in 2028 for a 2030 delivery date. Finally, works on the Central line were scheduled to begin in 2032 and be completed by 2034. Mr Wild noted that the Central line remained the most difficult of lines to modernise due to the age of the line. TfL was currently spending £350 million updating the interior of the Central line to give it a fresher look, though this would have to last until upgrades could be carried out in the 2030s.

Mr Wild stated that with regards to the Elizabeth line, there remained some infrastructure issues to resolve, though all essential work was scheduled to be completed by December 2018. It was likely that some cosmetic work would continue after December, but this would not hinder services. Mr Wild said that although he was confident of hitting the December deadline, he could not factor in last minute issues such as software bugs and the like that can occur on such projects. As with all works carried out by TfL, the safety of passengers and staff would take top precedence in any such scenario.

Mr Wild commented that several big station upgrades were due to be completed. London Victoria would be finished within three to six months and was going well. Both Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street stations had already been completed. Mr Wild stated that doing a 'deep dive' with regards to accessibility at some stage would be highly beneficial. One of the largest station upgrades was at Bank, which required a significant amount of work and resource. Mr Wild's colleague stated that London TravelWatch could be provided with an update on

the work in July. The Director, Policy and Investigation asked that London TravelWatch be informed prior to July, even if they could not make the information available to the public at that time. Mr Wild replied that TfL would provide that.

Mr Wild gave an update on the current situation with the Croxley link. It had been planned under the previous mayor to extend the Metropolitan line to Croxley. Although the project did not have a very strong business case, it was important to the community so plans for the works were carried out and completed. However, upon their completion the cost of the works had increased substantially to what had first been estimated, meaning that a business case could not be made to secure its funding.

Mr Wild explained that a venture capture financing model was considered, though TfL did not have the capacity to take on the risk. Instead, a far cheaper alternative had been suggested: a bus rapid transit scheme. Buses would run on segregated roads (like a tram) as a replacement service for the Metropolitan line but at a fraction of the cost. Similar schemes had been introduced across Europe and had proved popular with commuters. Introducing the service would allow TfL to reserve the land for the service, which would allow an underground extension to take place in future if the business case began to look more favourable, which often occurs following the introduction of bus rapid transit schemes. However, when presented to the community there had not been a great deal of appetite for it.

The Chair asked whether the reason the community had failed to be enthused by the bus rapid transit scheme was because they had expected to receive an extension to the Metropolitan line. Therefore, upon being offered the alternative service they had been disappointed. However, if it could be communicated to passengers that the bus rapid transit scheme would allow TfL to reserve the land so that it could be a precursor service to an extended Metropolitan line in future there may be much stronger interest in the model. Mr Wild agreed with the Chair's summations. The Chair suggested that it could be an area London TravelWatch could get involved with so that passengers were not left without any additional services. The Chief Executive agreed.

ACTION: Director, Policy and Investigation

The Director, Policy and Investigation acknowledged that a bus rapid transit scheme was an alternative model, though he enquired as to whether there was any possibility of extending the Metropolitan line as originally planned. The extension of the line would not only benefit residents at Croxley but would also provide an alternative route into London from Watford. This would be particularly necessary during the reconstruction works at Euston Station during the construction of HS2. Mr Wild replied that he agreed with the comments made by the Director, Policy and Investigation. However, resources were finite and at the current time the extension of the Metropolitan line to Croxley did not have a business case that could be supported by TfL.

AL asked if full costings had been made for the bus rapid transit scheme. Mr Wild replied that estimates would be within the region of £100-120 million. However, the service would be 'remarkably efficient'. A dialogue had begun with the new mayor at Watford, who had shown greater interest in the scheme than the previous administration.

A member raised an issue with TfL's current map that showed the Piccadilly line at Hammersmith as step-free, which it was not. An example of an alternative map produced by a private individual was handed to Mr Wild. The member stated that it contained a far greater array of information within it, and also was completely up-to-date in terms of accessibility of stations on the network. Mr Wild asked if he could have the details of the person who had produced the map. The member said they would provide them to Mr Wild.

Members enquired about TfL's policy with regards to suicide attempts on the network. It was known that current policy was not to publicise accidents/deaths on the line for fear of causing copycat behaviour by other vulnerable passengers. However, a recent study conducted by 'The Samaritans' on behalf of the City of London Bridge Authority suggested promoting intervention by the public reduced the rates of attempted suicide attempts. Mr Wild asked if he could gain access to the report. A member replied that it was public information though suggested speaking to John Averbs of Port Health for further details if TfL required them.

AL asked whether there were any particular hotspots for suicide attempts on the Tube. Mr Wild replied that many were random though most occurred on the deep tube, and additional training was being provided to staff working on those platforms. The profile of an individual most likely to attempt suicide was male, between 20 and 30 years of age. The group accounts for approximately 60% of all total suicide attempts across the network.

Mr Wild remarked that despite information to the contrary, at least half of all suicide attempts on the underground did not result in death and people were much more likely to come away with serious, long-term injuries. Mr Wild stated that misinformation online suggesting that it was one of the easiest ways to commit suicide may have contributed to the increase in attempts. The Board suggested that it would be a good ideal to publicise the fact that attempting suicide on the Tube often did not lead to death, as individuals who wish to do so want a guaranteed method of carrying the act out. Mr Wild said it he would take the feedback away and relay it to his teams.

The Chief Executive raised the issue of distracted walking, and asked whether TfL had helped to contribute to this by encouraging people to use their smartphones to gain information about journeys. Mr Wild acknowledged that one of the major health and safety risks now facing public transport authorities was the so-called 'smartphone zombie'. In an attempt to combat the problem more signage was being displayed on the platform floors and in places at eye level. However, it would likely be an issue that would not be going away, and would probably increase as access to faster internet networks became available over the coming years.

A member stated that they had been impressed by the professionalism of staff during a recent trip on the District line, though there still remained some problems with training. The member stated that during the journey a problem arose and passengers were asked get off the train. However, the member was unable to get off the train as staff could not find a ramp to allow him to depart. Whilst staff had been conducting their search the issue resolved itself and the train carried onto its destination. The Chief Executive remarked that the issue of evacuating disabled passengers in wheelchairs had been raised with Michael Liebreich, Chair of TfL's Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel. She asked that thinking be joined up on the issue if it was not already the case. Mr Wild said that it would be.

The Chair thanked Mr Wild for his time and contribution.

7 National Rail timetable changes 20 May – problems arising for passengers

The Director, Policy and Investigation gave an update to members with regard to the National Rail timetable changes that had come into force on 20 May 2018 and the problems that had resulted from them.

The introduction of the 20 May timetable had been the biggest timetable change for a generation and had been done to help increase capacity and attempt to untangle routes to allow greater efficiency on the network. London TravelWatch had been involved in the consultation process for over 20 years, and had raised concerns as early as 1999 that there was a risk that the network would not be able to handle the additional services.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that despite the various problems that had occurred following the timetable changes there had been some successes. London Overground, Southern Metro and Southeastern had all seen improvements to their reliability. The East London (London Overground) line had had its best day on record and metro services operated by Southern had seen significant improvements, helped by the disentanglement of routes coming in and out of London Bridge.

The Director, Policy and Investigation commented that there had been one common factor that had caused the majority of problems on GTR in the south and Northern Rail in the north of England. The issue involved failing to have enough drivers trained to work on the new routes. The reason for the delay had been mainly due to Network Rail failing to approve timetables until three months prior to 20 May, which had not allowed sufficient time for the operators to train staff.

A member suggested that both Network Rail and the operators would have been aware that problems were likely to arise due to a lack of trained drivers, but no one had been prepared to delay the changes. The Policy Officer (RN) commented that the Department for Transport would have been responsible for giving the go-ahead with the timetable and had likely advised Network Rail against any delay. A member remarked that all parties involved in the process had had an agenda, but what had been missing from their thinking had been the impact for passengers.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that GTR had since introduced a significantly reduced timetable in order to train drivers as quickly as possible. A number of drivers had also been loaned out from freight operators, who had a greater knowledge of the new GTR routes. It would likely be several more months before the full timetable would be available to passengers.

The Director, Policy and Investigation said that in total the May 2018 timetable had made 40,000 changes to the previous timetable. In December, a further 50,000 changes were due to be introduced, which would need to integrate with Crossrail. The Chair enquired whether lessons had been learnt from the problems experienced since May. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that it was hoped that the December changes would run more effectively. The Office for Rail and Road (ORR) had commissioned an inquiry led by Stephen Glaister CBE, which London

TravelWatch would input into. The London Assembly would also be doing its own investigations.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that the reason why the second phase of the timetable changes had been scheduled for December was due to a European rule derived from the start of the ski season, despite the UK not having a skiing industry. He said December was the busiest time of the year to be conducting work on the network due to the additional Christmas shoppers. Delaying the introduction to January, typically the quietest period of the year in terms of passenger numbers, would likely lead to less disruption and allow smoother running of services.

The Chair enquired whether it would be beneficial to have representatives from the DfT attend either the Board or Policy Committee meetings prior to December to ensure that the problems experienced in May were not about to repeat themselves. A member suggested that the organisation would have greater influence by inputting to the ORR and London Assembly reviews.

8 Autumn/winter resilience report (PC137)

The Director, Policy and Investigation presented his report on resilience of rail services over the autumn/winter period. A member asked whether London TravelWatch had encouraged Network Rail to increase tree cutting to prevent delays and cancellations on train routes. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that they had, particularly at the Alliance Board meetings that he had attended. The Board asked the Chair to write a letter to Network Rail asking for more data regarding the impact of tree cutting on the network.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

AL left the meeting.

9 Casework Q4 performance report (PC138)

The Casework Manager presented her report on the performance of transport operators in response to casework from the period January to March 2018. With regards to the number of cases received since May, there had been no significant increase despite the ongoing problems with the new May timetable.

A member noted that the way complaints had been handled by operators had improved over the period. He asked why the responses by operators had not always been at the level they were currently. The Casework Manager replied that a new operator had entered the market and had needed some guidance in dealing with customer complaints, which London TravelWatch had willingly provided.

In the casework example of TfL Overground taking longer than 10 days to respond, a member asked whether there was a bigger problem with trains stopping on the platform that the Casework Manager was aware of. The Casework Manager replied that she had not been aware of any such issue. In the case in question, the driver had used the old signage which had not been updated.

10 National Rail Q4 performance report (PC139)

The Policy Officer (KB) presented the National Rail performance report for the period January to March 2018. A member remarked that performance in general had not been particularly good, and for some operators service had been 'dreadful'. Another member noted that each time a franchise had changed hands performance had dropped. The Chief Executive stated that it was an area the Policy team could look into now that it was fully resourced again.

A member suggested that the words 'worst' and 'worse' had been misplaced several times throughout the document and asked that further proofreading be done prior to the papers being sent out for the next Policy Committee meeting. The Chief Executive replied that they would and that the Committee and Public Liaison Officer would receive additional guidance with regards to the production of the Committee papers prior to the next meeting.

A member noted that Southeastern had been one of the few operators to have had improved their performance over the period. Another member questioned the improvements in terms of performance for Southeastern as it had not reflected their experience. The Policy Officer (RN) remarked that although their performance had improved this had been against a steady decline in performance previously.

11 TfL Q4 performance report (PC140)

The Policy Officer (KB) stated that a report could not be presented as London TravelWatch was yet to receive all the data from TfL. A full report would be circulated to members prior to the next Policy Committee on 11 September.

ACTION: Committee and Public Liaison Officer

The Policy Officer (KB) presented some brief highlights from the data they had received from TfL to-date. Journey time reliability and bus speeds had improved over the quarter. Traffic volume had been at its lowest level since 2013-14 and lost customer hours had reduced. Customer satisfaction with regards to TfL buses on London Overground had fallen over the period.

12 Any other business

There was no other business.

13 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 reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting.