
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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**Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 15 April 2014 at
Dexter House, Royal Mint Court, London EC3**

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Alex Moffat	Performance Manager, London Buses (Item 7)
Lucy Preston	Travel Products Manager, Transport for London (Item 14)
Matt Winfield	Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Susan James	Casework Manager (Item 9)
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer (Item 7)
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

John Stewart welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

2 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3 Declarations of interest

Richard Dilks said he had met Rebecca Hall from the Department of Transport (DfT) previously in his 'Which' capacity. This was noted.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Policy committee on 25 February 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record, subject to amending under the Matters arising, item 5, "door to door services transport" to read "door to door services" and under Taxis, item 7, to amend "fares set by the metre" to "fares set by the meter".

5 Matters arising (PC030)

It was noted that Matt Winfield, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London (TfL) would follow up on the request made to TfL to consider reformatting its new poster showing fares from individual stations into leaflet form.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had discussed the work with Passenger Focus on stations that had never been surveyed for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) to check correlation between 'poor' and un-surveyed stations and that he was in the process of agreeing something with them to take forward.

It was also noted that the prominence on the London TravelWatch website of the Quarter 3 National Rail performance report had now been increased and that this can be found on the website under 'Key publications'.

Members asked the Chief Executive to ask the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) to confirm when they would give more prominence to the wording showing that Oyster fares may be cheaper than those shown on the National Rail enquiries website.

Action: Chief Executive

6 Key activities (PC031)

It was noted that, on highways obstructions in the London Borough of Camden, some good success had been achieved and compliance in some areas had been positive and also that feedback had been received from local businesses on how this affected them.

Members noted that the London Assembly scrutiny event for bus travel had been good and the Chair of the Transport Committee had been pleased with London TravelWatch's attendance and contribution.

Members were informed that there had been some success with the TfL junction review and that TfL had been persuaded by London TravelWatch's views on this.

Members suggested that it would be good to have a cost benefit case study of the West Anglia devolution showing what this has done for the customer and that the Department of Transport (DfT) should be asked to commission this study.

Action: Chief Executive

Members raised some concerns regarding Vauxhall bus station, in particular, about the dispersal of bus stops and also about loss of connectivity. They said a desirable outcome would be to have both a good interchange and a good environment at the station.

A discussion took place on cashless buses and Alex Moffat from London Buses was invited to respond to members' questions.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had been attending meetings to discuss vulnerable passengers and Oyster issues. He said cashless buses would be implemented from Sunday 6 July. He had raised London TravelWatch's support for the introduction of the facility on Oyster for passengers to make one more journey allowing them to go into their deposit on their Oyster. He explained that this was a change which allowed a passenger to go into debit in order to travel and then pay the amount back. The meetings also included discussions on the additional number of Oyster ticket stops to be added and a public information campaign which was due to start.

Members asked how a vulnerable person would be defined and said that people who travel with an Oyster did not usually have the means to pay by cash.

Alex Moffat said that the definition of a vulnerable person did not change with the introduction of cashless buses and that bus drivers had been given some discretion to allow vulnerable persons to travel with an issued notice. He said that the typical profile of those who used buses remained unchanged.

Members felt that there was a difference in practice now in that if someone was vulnerable, instead of having to find the cash to pay for a single ticket, they would now have to purchase an Oyster card.

Richard Dilks asked what the communication plan was for this. He said that vulnerable people may not present at the bus in the first place if they were not aware that there was a possibility that they may be allowed to travel.

Alex Moffat said that the Mayor had approved cashless buses on the condition that a review would be done on vulnerable passengers; the next step would be to commence the process of engaging with the public and following up on bus companies and drivers on this.

Ruth Thompson asked what percentage of the travelling public possessed a cashless card. Mr Moffat responded that all banks, as they re-issue bank cards, would include a contactless paying facility.

Ruth Thompson asked whether people would be allowed to pay for a ticket for someone else on their Oyster if they were vulnerable and whether this would be

considered to mitigate risks. Alex Moffat responded that this would not be possible because it would be a multiple use of a single Oyster card but further mitigation measures would be considered.

Alex Moffat said a monitoring process would take place once cashless buses had been introduced. The Chair said he would be interested in seeing the results of this monitoring exercise and the issues that arose from it.

The Director, Policy & Investigation, said he had attended a meeting with the London Transport Community Safety Partnership (LTCSP) that had covered all aspects of community security.

It was noted that the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive had held a briefing session with the Member of Parliament for Lewisham who would be picking up on issues London TravelWatch was concerned about.

It was noted that a useful meeting had taken place with Trust for London and London Councils on transport poverty. This item was in London TravelWatch's business plan but not as a major item so the work would be done in partnership with others.

7 Buses (PC032)

The Policy Officer introduced a report on the business plan priority to further promote the needs of bus passengers.

The Policy Officer said that the challenge for London's bus services in the future was to carry more passengers with reducing non-fare-box funding. He added that bus passengers were not often heard from and that there were very few passenger groups so it was difficult to engage with individual bus passengers. He suggested how the Board could help improve bus services including developing a bus users' community using electronic and social media to engage with bus passengers and for London TravelWatch to call for more bus priority.

Alex Moffat gave a presentation on monitoring and improving bus performance. His presentation covered reliability monitoring, quality incentive contracts, using iBus to improve bus service reliability, curtailments (short turning), using iBus to prioritise investment and using bus priority to help improve reliability.

Members noted that the bus monitoring objectives were to provide a comprehensive representation of the bus service quality from a passenger perspective, incentivise bus operators to provide a good performance, identify and investigate poor performance and continue to improve services to passengers.

Alex Moffat explained how the service was measured using Quality Service Indicators (QSIs) and said that iBus allowed TfL and bus operators to track the location of every bus in London by time and point. He said that there had been major enhancements in the time periods covered, the number of QSIs monitored and also in continuous monitoring.

Alex Moffat said it was not a perfect system but one that was much improved. He explained that when delays occurred during the day they operated on "headways" or the gaps between buses, as opposed to exact times. He said that different

measures were used depending on whether the routes were classed as low or high frequency. He said high frequency routes were those with 5 buses per hour or more and low frequency routes were those with 4 buses per hour or less. He added that bus services operated on a window of 2.5 minutes early or 5 minutes late.

The Director, Policy & Investigation, asked how bus routes that were high frequency in certain parts of the day, and low frequency at other times were monitored. Mr Moffat explained that on these routes it was the 'headway' that was the compliance target at all hours of day.

Members were surprised at this as in the early mornings and late evenings passengers were more likely to rely on the published timetables rather than a 'headway' figure.

Alex Moffat said that TfL used quality incentive contracts to incentivise reliability performance and that most routes were operating above minimum performance standards. He demonstrated that the long term bus performance trends showed an improvement in reliability since the quality incentive contracts had been introduced.

Alex Moffat said that iBus data helped to identify poor performance by using real time information to support operations, which gave better visibility of route, area and operator performance.

Alex Moffat said that buses were curtailed or short turned for a number of reasons including delays, planned roadworks or events, 'insufficient' layover, to improve overall reliability of the service e.g. fill in gaps in the service elsewhere and to prevent breaches of Drivers Hours regulations. He said overall service was reliable. He said the pattern of traffic lost mileage was showing an upturn or deterioration due to an increase in roadworks and other factors.

Stephen Locke said that curtailments were upsetting to passengers from a consumer point of view and that often these were not handled well with very late notice to passengers.

Alex Moffat said that information would be used to put together a league table of traffic lost mileage routes and that problem areas would be looked into. Members said that the aggregated data that was collected could mask individual problem areas. Alex Moffat responded that in addition to information gathered they also rely on stakeholder feedback to help identify problem areas. He said due to their nature, most delays were unpredictable and random but where notice was given e.g. for roadworks, the schedule could be adjusted and mitigation measures put in place.

Alex Moffat said that iBus data was used to enhance understanding of network performance and the impact of congestion on reliability. He explained that the average bus speeds per borough were measured. He said that bus priority programmes were being used to help improve reliability. Also, that a Bus Pinch Points Programme and a High Quality Bus Priority Corridors programme were being used to support growth in London.

The Chair thanked Alex Moffat for his helpful report. He summarised the discussion as follows:

- It was important to stress bus priority especially in the light of the fact that roads were getting more congested.
- Speeds of buses needed to be monitored and London TravelWatch needed to work more with TfL to get more information on this.
- There needed to be a focus on poorly performing routes and also a means of getting across to passengers that London TravelWatch was listening to their concerns.
- Though consultation with bus passengers was underway and services were getting better, London TravelWatch needed to keep pushing this and develop, within its resources, a bus community using electronic and social media.
- There needed to be better marketing of services and communication of passengers' priorities, for example that the bus community still wanted Countdown.
- The curtailment issue needed to be addressed in terms of how this affected passengers, especially those at the end of the service who suffered disproportionately from curtailment.

Members noted that London TravelWatch should focus more on outcomes and the impact on passengers and less on budgets. It should also look more at individual routes with the objective of considering all passengers instead of using aggregated iBus data and should find a mechanism to finely tune the data to individual routes. London TravelWatch should see how it could involve other bodies in this. It was suggested that London TravelWatch could focus on two clusters of users, those on problem routes and those that could benefit from further changes. In addition, London TravelWatch should work with bus users' communities focusing on providing influence instead of working with individuals.

It was agreed that the Policy Officer would finalise this report. The Chief Executive would look at ways to take this forward and possibly take this up with TfL.

Action: Chief Executive/Policy Officer

8 Local engagement events (PC033)

The Communications Officer presented a report on the transport user engagement events held in Bexleyheath and Edmonton Green to determine whether any such events should be held in 2014/15.

Chris Brown asked for a clarification of the costs in terms of staff time doing this work. The Chief Executive responded that staff were given time off in lieu if the events fell on days they would not normally work, such as at weekends.

Glyn Kyle said that this was a well-organised event and that the report had been well-drafted but that the event was not achieving enough coverage and noted that

London TravelWatch had limited resources. He said he had no objection to the use of engagement events for a particular issue in a certain locality.

Richard Dilks said that though he accepted that London TravelWatch needed to understand local issues and engage more at a local level he was not convinced that these events were the best way of achieving this.

Stephen Locke said he was not clear that these events were meeting the objectives London TravelWatch set itself, which were profile raising with stakeholders and the public, data gathering and developing an insight to issues individuals face in a particular area. He said that these objectives needed to be looked at separately to see if there were alternative ways of achieving them.

Ruth Thompson said that London TravelWatch was trying to do too many things through this process and was not focusing enough on achieving influence. She said it would be better to go to a location when there was something important happening, or likely to happen, as a means of local engagement.

Abdikafi Rage agreed with Ruth Thompson and about going to an engagement event with a specific issue to address.

Chris Brown said that the events appeared to be ad hoc in nature and he found this concerning. He felt that, in terms of profile raising, it would be better for London TravelWatch to 'piggy back' on other events where other community groups were taking part.

The Chief Executive said these events were based on the Bus Users' UK format and had been refined over time. She explained that each event that had taken place had had a focus but agreed that times had changed and things should move on.

The Chair concluded that in future these events should be well-targeted and only take place around particular issues in particular areas. He said that familiarisation with different parts of London from the transport user perspective should be done differently and a way forward should be found for this.

Members thanked the Communications Officer for a useful and informative report.

9 Casework update

The Casework Manager told the meeting that she had recently been looking back over past reports and graphs which were showing that the performance of the casework team had improved significantly since 2005/6 when performance against time targets was a major concern. The target then of 75% of appeals made to the operator within 5 days was only achieved in 45% of cases. Currently this target is at 100%.

She said the performance of the casework team over the period had been excellent. They had made improvements through amending procedures and making better use of IT and also working better internally in liaising with the Policy team and externally with operators. In terms of achieving success for passengers, the area that remained challenging was prosecutions relating to penalty fares. This was because operators were rarely technically wrong and London TravelWatch did

not have power to enforce change. However, members were informed that the casework team had built and maintained excellent relationships with the two penalty fare appeal bodies – Independent Appeals Service (IAS) and Independent Penalty Fares Appeals Service (IPFAS) and this had also contributed to positive outcomes where discretion had not been applied.

The Casework Manager updated members on the performance of the casework team in the period January to March 2014 and identified issues of concern regarding operator performance in handling appeals.

It was noted that there had been increases in cases about Network Rail and TfL in the last quarter but they were closer to meeting their own targets and had tried to manage the difficulties they experienced. Other problems, for example with East Coast over the Christmas period, had been explained. Issues received from the last quarter, for example relating to the weather, were still coming through as caseworkers dealt with problems in arrears.

There had been over 1,000 contacts relating to lost property on buses and this needed to be investigated more closely as there was no evidence to explain why this was such a high number.

Members noted that on the whole operators had improved their own responses to passengers which partly explained the reduction in appeal cases in the last 12 months.

There had been a notable success in one issue during the period. Passengers with London Terminal tickets who previously could not make their journey into St Pancras and onto City Thameslink, after intervention from the Policy team, could now do so which was an excellent outcome for passengers.

There had been some confusion with passengers with Oyster, particularly in respect of unfinished journeys, which led to London TravelWatch commissioning research into this. The publicity surrounding this led to a 10% increase in passengers claiming refunds for these from TfL, which was another successful outcome for passengers.

It was noted that the report would be put on the website with the papers for this meeting.

Action: Executive Assistant

Members thanked the Casework Manager for her update and the positive outcomes achieved. They said that the casework team should be congratulated for their work and contribution to the organisation.

10 Any other business

There was no other business.

11 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 had a preliminary discussion on the issues that the London Underground vision for the tube raised for passengers. They also considered various matters relating to fares and ticketing with representatives from ATOC, the DfT and TfL and reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting