
Minutes

Agenda item: 2
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Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 15 December 2015 at 169 Union Street, London SE1 0LL

Contents

- 1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**
- 2 Apologies for absence**
- 3 Declarations of interest**
- 4 Minutes**
- 5 Matters arising (PC072)**
- 6 Key activities (PC073)**
- 7 Bank junction remodelling**
- 8 Taxi consultation response (PC074)**
- 9 Transport affordability report (PC075)**
- 10 Update on High Speed 2 (PC076)**
- 11 Casework report**
- 12 National Rail performance report (PC077)**
- 13 Any other business**
- 14 Resolution to move into confidential session**

Present

Members

Chris Brown, Richard Dilks (from Item 7), Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke, Abdikafi Rage, John Stewart (Chair), Ruth Thompson

Guests

Gillian Howard Project and Programme Manager (Bank), City of London Corporation

Secretariat

Keletha Barrett	Policy Officer (KB) (Item 12)
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Susan James	Casework Manager
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant
Fayza Patel	Casework Officer (FP) (Item 11)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer (VS)

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

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

2 Apologies for absence

Richard Dilks sent apologies in advance for lateness.

3 Declarations of interest

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

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Policy committee on 20 October 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

5 Matters arising (PC072)

It was agreed that the Director, Policy and Investigation, would write to the Transport Minister on the importance of information about right time arrivals distinguishing between peak and off-peak services. In addition, the letter should refer to the issue of providing compensation after a delay of 15 minutes alongside the report on the mechanics of how this might be achieved.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Policy committee would look at the matter of train operator websites and how they refer unsatisfied passengers to London TravelWatch. This would be in line with work of the Office and Rail and Road the required operators to agree complaint handling protocols with London TravelWatch.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Key activities (PC073)

Members discussed the activities undertaken by officers since the previous meeting. They noted that the Chief Executive had attended a Travel Demand Management Board meeting to discuss services over the Christmas and New Year holiday period and asked about potential for disruption. The Chief Executive said that the industry was working closely and at high level to avoid a repeat of previous problems. However, communications with passengers had been late as the operators had been late to finalise their ticket acceptance arrangements.

She noted that only Thameslink trains would be running on 26 December, which would be a Saturday and not the official Boxing Day bank holiday. Transport for London had written to the Department for Transport to ask whether it was acceptable for rail transport on the day after Christmas to be so limited when their studies suggested that demand on the Boxing Day was similar to a normal Sunday. Members noted that the terms and conditions of train drivers would be a significant hurdle to the provision of widespread services on Boxing Day.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive said that the meeting with Transport Focus had been to meet their new Casework Manager and had focused on sharing information and the need for consistency in approach.

In relation to the meeting with South West Trains, the Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had met the DfT and potential bidders for the new franchise and that the intention appeared to be to move to devolution part way through the term. The key would be the commitment to the construction of Crossrail 2, which would be the point when services would need to devolve to the new concession.

In response to a question about the Greenwich public transport liaison meeting, the Policy Officer (VS) said that it had discussed gyratories and so he felt it would be valuable to attend. He was not able to attend all public transport liaison meetings but did go when there were specific and relevant issues under discussion.

Members noted that the meeting with the Rail Executive and DfT over the ticket office closure at Roydon station led to a very positive outcome for passengers. London TravelWatch's suggested mitigations following the closure had been adopted almost wholesale.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive said that Catch the Bus Week was funded by operators and that she had met them to discuss their plans for increased passenger focus in their activities.

It was noted that several meetings during the period had been held with Govia Thameslink Railway. Officers said that this was a combination of routine updates and a meeting to discuss changes to the operation of their ticket offices in future.

In relation to the meeting with Vernon Everett of TfL about the comprehensive spending review, the Chair of London TravelWatch said that there would be a severe phasing out of the TfL resource grant, which had significant implications for buses and streets.

7 Bank junction remodelling

Gillian Howard, Project and Programme Manager for Bank at the City of London Corporation, gave a presentation on proposals for remodelling the junction at Bank.

Ms Howard said that the junction had been identified as having problems in 2013 and these proposals were trying to solve those problems. This was difficult as the junction involved six arms of traffic movement, listed buildings, nearly 100,000 using the Underground station and pedestrian congestion on the pavements. The

aim of the proposals was to reduce casualties and crowding and improve the flow of traffic.

Currently, during the morning peak, pedestrians made up 63% of the movements but had a very small amount of dedicated road space and very little time to cross roads. The proposals would consider options for removing motor vehicles in different configurations.

Ms Howard said that the short-term proposal would remove all motor vehicles apart from buses between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm on weekdays, with priority for buses, cycles and pedestrians. Servicing would be permitted but vehicles would not be allowed to cross the junction. This would lead to a reduction of journey times across all modes.

Members welcomed the positive outcomes the proposals could achieve for bus users, pedestrians and cyclists. It was noted that there were currently high levels of air pollution in the Bank area and the proposals would have a positive impact on everyone who used the junction.

In response to a question about the implications for the scheme of major changes to Bank Underground station, Ms Howard said that London Underground and TfL Streets were on represented on the project board and the proposals took account of the changes.

Ms Howard said that Monument junction, near to Bank, was part of TfL's strategic road network and not part of these proposals. However, she thought that there would be long-term options that would benefit Monument, such as introducing pedestrian crossings and dropped kerbs to all junctions.

It was noted that previous attempts to improve the Bank junction in the 1970s had been halted under pressure from taxi drivers and that taxis may resist the current proposals too. Ms Howard said she thought it was possible that air quality issues may override other considerations on this occasion.

Members thanked Ms Howard for her useful and interesting presentation. It was agreed that members supported the work to improve Bank junction and would be happy to back the plans publicly if it would be helpful.

8 Taxi consultation response (PC074)

The Policy Officer (VS) presented a report on London TravelWatch's proposed response to TfL's consultation on changes to the private hire vehicles (PHVs) regulations.

Members discussed the TfL proposal to restrict PHV drivers to working for only one company. It was agreed that the proposal did not address TfL's actual concern, which was about the number of hours worked, and that this should be addressed specifically rather than through an attempt at restraint of trade.

Members noted that London TravelWatch should include a note highlighting the importance of PHVs and how changes in technology could be advantageous for consumers and should be embraced rather than resisted.

It was noted that some of London TravelWatch's most important points, such as the need for London TravelWatch to have a role in consumer complaints, was somewhat lost as it did not form part of a formal consultation question. These issues should be highlighted in the foreword rather than be left to the end.

Members agreed that it was very important for PHV companies to have a fixed landline phone line that customers could use to contact them. This requirement should be referred to in London TravelWatch's response, which the Policy Officer (VS) would compile and submit.

Action: Policy Officer (VS)

9 Transport affordability (PC073)

The Chief Executive presented London TravelWatch's report 'Living on the Edge: the impact of travel costs on low paid workers living in outer London'. She said it would be a useful tool for setting out discussions with Mayoral candidates on the impact of travel costs, distribution of housing, access to jobs and the importance of interchanges.

Members welcomed the report and noted significant improvements since the initial draft. The conclusions were realistic and could be achieved through small, incremental changes. It highlighted an area of fixed costs that had previously had little scrutiny.

10 Update on High Speed 2 (PC074)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented a report on the progress of the High Speed 2 Hybrid Bill. He said that he along with the Chair of London TravelWatch had attended the HS2 Hybrid Bill committee to put forward London TravelWatch's concerns about Euston including the impact of building works and the need for greater permeability in the design. These concerns remained but there was some comfort in relation improving the interchange at Old Oak Common and on resilience.

Members maintained concern about the proposal to withdraw the current statutory provisions in relation line closures as a result of HS2. There would be no obligation to consult or to respond to any consultation, which would remove a significant existing level of scrutiny over decisions. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would continue to press for the current arrangements to be maintained.

On other issues, there were several worthwhile commitments in the new HS2 proposals that were aligned with London TravelWatch's suggestions and these should be claimed as impacts.

11 Casework report

The Chief Executive and Casework Officer (FP) presented the Casework report, which had been circulated to members separately. The Chief Executive said that the TfL performance report should also have been presented to members but officers

were still waiting for some information from TfL. She hoped to be able to send it to members shortly.

Members asked whether London TravelWatch should approach the penalty fare bodies to discuss the issues that cause passengers to appeal. The Chief Executive said she knew that the Casework Manager was in regular contact with TfL on the issue of penalty fares.

It was noted that the TfL system for making complaints online did not allow for the complainant to obtain a copy of the complaint. It was also noted that users of the Dial a Ride service may not find it straightforward to use the standard complaints procedures and that alternative systems should be offered.

12 National Rail performance report (PC077)

The Policy Officer (KB) presented a report on National Rail performance for the period July to September 2015. She said that overall the performance was lower than the previous quarter and the same quarter in the previous year, with the decline mainly attributable to infrastructure works and problems with rolling stock and staffing levels. The biggest improvement was for TfL Rail and the worst was Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR). Southern had now become part of GTR, which was treated as a single operator in the report.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that TfL Rail was incentivised in its franchise to actively manage Network Rail in order to minimise disruption for passengers, as well as carry out other improvement works. This approach was welcomed.

Members asked whether the performance of Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern could be presented separately but the Policy Officer (KB) said this would not be possible. They were all now part of the same owning group, GTR, and Network Rail did not disaggregate the information. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would ask Network Rail whether it would be possible for them to provide separate information in future.

Action: Policy Officer (KB)

13 Any other business

There was no other business.

14 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 discussed social needs transport, road safety and TfL complaints handling and also reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting.