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## Minutes

Agenda item: 5  
Drafted: 07.10.14

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**Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 16 September 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

Richard De Cani	Director of Transport Strategy and Policy, Transport for London
Matt Winfield	Senior External Affairs Manager, Transport for London

#### Secretariat

Keletha Barrett	Policy Assistant (Item 11)
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Susan James	Casework Manager (Item 10)
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer
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**

Penny Rees of Transport for London had been due to attend for Item 7 but sent apologies.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

Stephen Locke declared in respect of an item that was due to be considered in the confidential session that he was a member of Passenger Focus and that the organisation was scheduled to become a consumer body shadowing the Highways Agency.

Glyn Kyle said in respect of Item 8 he was a director of a housing association in East Bexley and for his standing declarations he was Chair of the City of London Healthwatch.

## **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the Policy committee on 15 April 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record, subject to amending the final sentence of Item 6 to read as follows: "This item was in London TravelWatch's business plan and would be done in partnership with others."

## **5 Matters arising (PC034)**

The Chief Executive said that work relating to Passenger Focus's train passenger survey and London stations that had never been surveyed now formed part of the work plan for later in the year. Some discussions had been held with Passenger Focus and London Assembly members but detailed work on the project had not yet begun.

Members asked whether the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) would be amending the National Rail enquiries website to give more prominence to the wording that Oyster prices may be cheaper than the prices shown. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that dealing with member bodies such as ATOC could be difficult as they needed to get a united view from their members before committing to changes. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would continue to press in this area.

It was noted that it was important for a cost-benefit study of the West Anglia devolution to be commissioned prior to the franchise changing hands in 2015. The issue was raised in the day before the meeting in discussion with Gareth Powell at Transport for London (TfL) and a letter was to be sent to the Treasury and TfL to seek some progress. This item was not yet complete.

## **6 Key activities (PC035)**

Members considered the key activities undertaken by members and senior staff on operational transport issues.

The Chief Executive noted that meetings had been held with Heathrow Airport and that London TravelWatch was even-handed in its approach to airports in its area. The focus of the meetings had been on public transport access to the airport. She said that the report on access to airports would be completed shortly.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said he had attended a meeting with TfL on the future of personalised transport with the aim of advising TfL's consultants in areas they should be exploring. He was awaiting progress on this potentially sensitive issue. It was likely that once the consultation details were published London TravelWatch would return to this area.

The Chair of London TravelWatch said he had agreed to sit on the Office of Rail Regulation consumer panel as London TravelWatch representative from the new year.

## **7 Update on Mayor's Vision for Cycling highways schemes (PC036)**

The Policy Officer said that London TravelWatch had invited several visitors to attend for this item. The London Cycle Campaign were unable to attend but representatives from the London Chambers of Commerce and the City of London were present. In addition, London TravelWatch's Safety Adviser was available to respond to any questions related to safety raised in London TravelWatch's report.

The Policy Officer said that he had expected TfL to have published its impact reports on the proposed North-South and East-West Cycle Superhighways a few days previously but this had been delayed. As TfL's work on impacts was not yet ready to be shared, no one from TfL was able to attend the meeting. This made it difficult for London TravelWatch to take a considered view on the proposals because the modelling data was a key part of the scheme.

London TravelWatch had requested information on the impact of proposed cycle schemes at Oval and Vauxhall. This information had now been received and was being considered by London TravelWatch as part of its remit to represent all transport users in London, including cyclists, pedestrians and bus users.

The Policy Officer said that London TravelWatch's previous comments on Cycle Superhighways had focused on junction design as they were the most important parts of the network in terms of road safety. In 2013 members looked at Cycle Superhighway 2 along Stratford High Street and expressed concern about the loss of bus priority, the introduction of bus stop bypasses and the sharing of pavements. Members had asked TfL to consult bus users on the changes as they were directly affected by them. This had some success as later TfL cycle schemes did discuss bus issues. London TravelWatch had supported the changes at Tottenham Court Road but had some concerns about proposals at Elephant & Castle that would move a busy bus stop further away from the tube station.

In addition, London TravelWatch had made contributions on issues such as wide bus lanes. The organisation had been considering cycle issues for many years and was inviting those with an interest in cycling to put forward their ideas on how best to balance the needs of all transport users.

A transport officer from the City of London addressed the meeting. He said that the North-South and East-West Cycle Superhighway proposals were very significant

in scope and would have an impact across London. They were likely to result in traffic capacity being reduced by 15% and the City of London was keen to understand the implications. The City's members supported the proposals in principle but were concerned about the impact on pedestrians. The lack of technical information made it difficult to prepare a detailed report for members' consideration. He said that TfL was already undertaking exploratory works on the scheme at Upper Thames Street so he was sceptical about how much influence the consultation responses might have.

Members asked what the City of London's principle concerns were relating to pedestrians. The City of London officer said that TfL had gradually reduced the amount of time allowed for pedestrians at crossings and that the signal cycle times at traffic lights were increasing, meaning that pedestrians were waiting longer to cross roads. He was concerned that the new proposals might increase pedestrian waiting times yet further.

Members noted that some of TfL's proposals were more easily reversible than others. The City of London officer said that the proposals to use hard kerbing in the street was problematic as it would mean streets had to be closed during roadworks, whereas they might be able to remain open if removable barriers were used instead.

A member said it was important to have enough information to ensure that transport planners made the most efficient use of the street space available. She said that buses were the most efficient means of transporting people into London and that it was important for London TravelWatch to continue to emphasise the impact of the proposals on bus users.

A member asked whether TfL had any evidence on the effectiveness of 'armadillos', which were humps in the road to separate the cycle path from the rest of the traffic. The Policy Officer said TfL had undertaken a review of them internationally and was also carrying out some off-road assessments. He noted that motorcyclists and pedestrians had expressed some concerns about them. They were being introduced as a trial along Battersea Park Road and their implementation should be monitored.

The City of London transport officer noted that TfL had previously identified 10 key surface transport outcomes, including the quality of the bus network, and said that all decisions should take account of these outcomes.

A member said that generally cyclists and pedestrians should not share pavements but there were occasions when sharing should be allowed. She also noted that the proposed routes were complex and may take time for cyclists to master and it was not clear how cyclists could join, leave or cross the routes along the way.

A member endorsed the findings of London TravelWatch's report and its evidenced approach on issues such as junction design. He agreed that there should be more research into innovations such as cycle bypasses.

A member said that any change to the road network would result in some groups of transport users being disbenefited and it was important to ensure that decisions about trade-offs between different groups were made following analysis of proper

evidence and bearing in mind that some transport users were not as good at self-advocating as others.

A policy officer from the London Chambers of Commerce said that his group wanted to see more information on the economic impact of the proposals, including details of where displaced traffic would go. His group was concerned about the possible impact on deliveries and taxis. He supported improvements to cycling infrastructure but wanted to ensure that the changes were right following proper modelling and analysis. He said that the deadline for responding to the consultation was too soon given the delay in providing impact information.

London TravelWatch's Safety Adviser said that London TravelWatch prioritised seeing more people cycling more safely over existing cyclists being able to cycle further. He questioned how the new proposals would result in increases to the numbers of new cyclists.

A member of the public asked why London TravelWatch was supporting wide bus lanes and questioned whether they were more attractive to novice cyclists as they still had to share with buses. London TravelWatch's Policy Officer said that the DfT had issued guidance saying that 4.5m-wide bus lanes enabled buses to pass cyclists and it was likely they had evidence for this position.

The Chair of London TravelWatch said that the organisation was not opposed to the Mayor's vision for cycling. London TravelWatch strongly supported cyclists and cycling but wanted to see evidence about the impact of changes, especially in relation to novel uses such as armadillos and bus stop bypasses. London TravelWatch's report should not be seen as the organisation opposing the expansion of cycling.

The Chair of the Policy Committee said that London TravelWatch wanted to see an assessment of the impact of the proposals across all modes, with reference to experience from actual live schemes such as the bus stop bypasses at Stratford and the existing wide bus lanes. London TravelWatch supported the proposals in principle but wanted more evidence on impacts and to continue a constructive dialogue with a full range of affected organisations and stakeholders.

It was agreed that the Policy Officer would draft a response to the consultation and circulate it to members for consideration.

**Action: Policy Officer**

## **8 Proposed river crossings (PC037)**

Richard de Cani, TfL's director of transport strategy and policy, gave a presentation on TfL's consultation about possible new river crossings in East London. He said that TfL wanted to increase road capacity in the area as there was increasing congestion on existing routes such as the Blackwall Tunnel and Woolwich ferry, combined with economic growth in East London. He said there had been considerable increase in public transport links across the river but no increase in road capacity.

Mr de Cani outlined the five options under consideration. He said that the consultation would be closing shortly and set out timeframes going forward. A

member questioned whether the rationale for one of the options, at Silvertown, was to relieve existing congestion rather than provide new capacity. Mr de Cani said this was broadly the case but there would be a lot of interaction between the crossings and they would operate as a package. A member asked whether the options at Belvedere and Gallions Reach would give useful options for people wanting to cross the river. Mr de Cani said that both options would increase capacity for crossing the river, which was at the moment limited to the Blackwall Tunnel.

A member asked about the role of ferries in future river crossings. Mr de Cani said that ferries were a cheap and quick option for places where bridges would be difficult to build. However, they did not increase capacity to the same extent as bridges.

The Policy Officer noted that the introduction of tolls or charges on the new crossings would have an impact on traffic patterns in the wider area. Mr de Cani said that mitigation work for local roads would need to be done.

A member asked whether TfL would consider restricting the Blackwall Tunnel to cars and buses once the new crossing was in place in order to avoid the problem of over-height vehicles seeking to use it. Mr de Cani said this was not part of current TfL planning.

Members noted that circumstances had changed since they had last considered the issue of river crossings. A member noted that proposals at Gallions Reach had been to public inquiry and had not been supported because there was not enough information about regeneration.

Mr de Cani said that the Thames Gateway inquiry had been based on the old London Plan but these proposals were based on the new London Plan. There had also been changes in travel demand and growth in East London. The context for the new proposals was very different from that during the previous inquiry.

Members discussed various issues, including the ability of people to cross the river by private transport, the increase in population and economic growth in East London and the views of the previous board of London TravelWatch. Members also noted concern about impact on wider communities arising from the proposals.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would respond to the consultation with in principle support but setting out its reservations and concerns. It was agreed that the Policy Officer would draft a response and circulate it to members for comment.

**Action: Policy Officer**

## **9 Update on London TravelWatch's ticket office consultation**

The Policy Officer updated members on the responses London TravelWatch had received to its consultation on changes to London Underground's ticket selling arrangements. He said that there had been over 1,500 responses in the first three and a half weeks of the consultation, with another two and a half weeks remaining. There was likely to be a spike in responses shortly before the closing date and other spikes had been recorded following promotion by London Assembly members, the Guardian blog and Mayorwatch.

The Policy Officer said that over 100 posters promoting the consultation had been printed but were being displayed at London Underground staff's discretion.

The responses represented a wide spread of stations, with only 22 stations currently not being represented by at least one response. Stations with the highest levels of feedback have around 60-70 responses. The spread of respondents appeared genuine, with no obviously organised groups or campaigns.

Many respondents had answered the open-ended questions and Ipsos-Mori would need to take care in coding and analysing these answers.

A representative of the RMT union said that the closure of National Rail stations would be governed by regulations and asked why London TravelWatch had experienced difficulties in gaining co-operation by TfL. He also asked whether there was scope for people to respond to the survey by hard copy.

The Policy Officer said that TfL was under no statutory consultation obligations when closing ticket offices, unlike those in National Rail stations. He said that London TravelWatch staff were able to input responses manually when people called asking for help but due to London TravelWatch's limited resources this could only be carried out on a small scale. The Chief Executive confirmed that TfL had not been obstructive but had followed its own processes.

It was noted that officers would focus on a final push for responses close to the closing date, promoting the survey among bloggers, representatives and social media. Officers would also target those areas where stations were under-represented in responses.

A report on the outcome of the consultation would be presented to a future committee.

## **10 Casework report (PC038)**

The Casework Manager said that the team had handled an increased number of complaints for the period April to June 2014 but staff were working smarter so were able to accommodate the increased workload. There had not yet been any significant cases relating to the introduction of cashless buses but as London TravelWatch received cases in arrears this may yet happen.

The report now included a table comparing the types of complaints received about National Rail and TfL services. The biggest issue of complaint for both TfL and National Rail related to fares, which included penalty fares. TfL had a significant proportion of complaints about staff conduct, which usually related to bus drivers.

Some passengers complained after being dissatisfied about the amount they received when being refunded for a season ticket. The Casework Manager has pressed for refund calculations to be provided in writing and for charters to include the option of change-over tickets.

There was a spike in complaints relating to Southern and the Casework Manager had spent some time trying to establish the reason for this but none could be identified and the complaints eventually tailed off.

The casework team had been given contact details for the complaints handlers at the new Thameslink franchise and there should be continuity for passengers whose cases crossed over the franchise periods.

The Casework Manager said that some passengers had been unclear about whether they would be entitled to refunds in respect of TfL's strike action and clearer communication about this by TfL would have been welcome. She added that TfL used to enforce the alcohol restrictions in place on their network but no longer carried this out.

A member noted that First Great Western cases took an average of 22 days to resolve, which was longer than most. The Casework Manager said that London TravelWatch received few cases about this operator and its average was affected by a small number of long-running cases.

A member asked why there had been an increase in the number of initial cases London TravelWatch had received. The Casework Manager said that the current quarter had seen a large increase in the number of calls about penalty fares and this may have affected the end of the previous quarter. Train operators had increased the numbers of revenue protection officers on routes and some passengers seemed to be approaching London TravelWatch in the first instance even though it is clear that they should complete the internal process first.

A member said that London TravelWatch listed enforcement as one of its transport priorities and that it should call on TfL to enforce its restrictions on alcohol. It was agreed that if there was an increase in well-evidenced complaints on this issue it would be worthwhile approaching the operators to seek better enforcement.

## **11 National Rail performance report (PC039)**

The Policy Assistant presented London TravelWatch's report on the performance of National Rail transport operators. She said that scores had reduced across all measures, largely caused by infrastructure and weather-related problems. The works at London Bridge station were still having an impact on Southern's performance. She said that the report now included a new graph showing passenger satisfaction with train operators generally rather than for the specific journey.

Members noted that Passenger Focus had recently published research on passenger trust in train operators and Southern had been rated worst in the UK. It may be worth including a reference to this one-off survey in the report.

A member asked whether information on right time arrivals could be broken into more detail, for example in relation to peak and off peak services. The Policy Assistant agreed to look into it.

**Action: Policy Assistant**

## **12 Transport for London performance report (PC040)**

The Policy Officer presented the report and highlighted that TfL had experienced difficulties in meeting its targets following industrial action and was also struggling to reach the very challenging target of having 95% of bus stops being accessible.



It was noted that the TfL report was one quarter behind the National Rail report as the more up to date TfL data was not yet ready for publication.

**13 Any other business**

Members welcomed the positive letter from the Mayor of London about the London TravelWatch annual report.

**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 considered Alternative Dispute Resolution and changes to the Highways Agency and also reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting