
Minutes

Agenda item: 5

Drafted: 20.01.15

**Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 18 November 2014 at
London Councils, 59½ Southwark Street, London SE1 0AL**

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Present

Members

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

Secretariat

Keletha Barrett	Policy Officer
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Robert Nicholls	Policy Officer
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer

Guests

Gareth Powell	Transport for London
Shashi Verma	Transport for London

Minutes

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

The acting Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and made standard safety announcements. He thanked London Councils for allowing London TravelWatch to make use of its conference room.

2 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from John Stewart, who was unwell.

3 **Declarations of interest**

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Policy committee on 16 September 2014 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Correction of the word 'site' to 'sit' on the 10th line of page 3.
- Correction of the word 'principle' to 'principal' in the first line of the second paragraph on page 4.
- Insertion of the following paragraph between paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 4: 'A member said that the absence of the TfL data at the launch of its consultation was problematic, and that the impacts of the schemes on bus users in particular should form a key part of London TravelWatch's response to the proposals. Nevertheless, he said that this was an historic moment for cycling infrastructure in London akin to the introduction of bus lanes and that London TravelWatch must ensure its support for cycling and cyclists is seen to be genuine.'
- Deletion of the word 'more' from the 15th line on page 5.

It was noted that members preferred to be referred to as members rather than referenced by name.

5 **Matters arising (PC042)**

The matters arising report was noted.

6 **Key activities (PC043)**

In response to a question, the Director, Policy and Investigation, clarified that the Rail Industry Planning Group was the main body responsible for long-term

planning at Network Rail. The Policy Officer explained that the Better Junctions Design Review Group arose from TfL's desire to address the most dangerous junctions for cyclists. The Group included London TravelWatch and local authorities and allowed proposed junction changes to be considered by interested parties before the public consultation phase.

It was noted that officers had been briefed on the annual changes to TfL's fares and ticketing policies but that the briefing had focused on the positive changes without explaining in detail the detrimental changes. Members were disappointed that TfL had not acted with greater transparency and noted that this would be discussed with Shashi Verma at TfL at a future meeting.

Members noted that it seemed likely London TravelWatch would take on a role as an ADR entity under new EU legislation. Officers and the Chair of London TravelWatch continued to discuss this issue with relevant parties to try to ensure that the best outcome for passengers was achieved.

The Policy Officer said that TfL's Access for All event, at which John Stewart had spoken, had been a success and members of the public had been impressed with London TravelWatch's work on accessibility.

A member noted that the seminar on bus priority had been interesting and that Leon Daniels, Director of Surface Transport at TfL, had said that it would not be possible to continue to direct additional funding towards buses, which may have implications for any bus priority measures to mitigate the impact of the Cycle Superhighways proposals.

The Chief Executive said that Passengerspulsen was a newly established consumer transport body in Denmark and had visited London TravelWatch on a fact-finding mission. The delegation had increased in scope as Passengerspulsen had taken the opportunity to invite colleagues from Norway and Germany as well.

7 Transport for London performance report (PC044)

The Policy Officer presented London TravelWatch's report on Transport for London's performance for the period January to March 2014. He said that the report was delayed due to the length of time taken to obtain data about the performance of TfL Streets. This was a recurring problem as streets data always lagged behind information about the rest of TfL's services.

The Policy Officer said that he hoped to modify the performance report by analysing measures that more closely aligned with passenger priorities. In relation to performance relating to bus speeds, TfL held the data and London TravelWatch was negotiating with them over how to use it.

The Policy Officer said that cycle numbers were increasing but that the performance measure for the length of time it took general traffic to make their journeys in London was below target. A member said it would be important for TfL not to simply reduce the target in order to make it easier to meet, as had happened when adverse weather made the condition of the roads harder to maintain. The Policy Officer said that roads pricing needed to remain on the agenda as a potential long-term solution to congestion although he acknowledged this was politically sensitive.

The Chair noted that for other modes there was a number of complaints per 100,000 journeys and asked whether there was a similar measure for streets. Matt Winfield of TfL said that it was difficult to allocate complaints to the 'streets' mode and that it would be very complicated to administer.

The Policy Officer said that TfL was working on the development of a performance measure for overcrowding on buses.

It was noted that the new additional carriages for London Overground had begun to be introduced into service on the East London line.

It was noted that Dial-a-Ride had received 159 complaints per 100,000 journeys, which was very high compared to other modes. The Policy Officer said that users would be likely to complain if they were unable to book the journeys they wanted. Members noted that this should be kept under review.

8 Tram satisfaction survey comparison (PC045)

The Policy Officer presented a report on the comparison of satisfaction with tram services in London and the rest of the country. The data about satisfaction in London came from TfL's regular satisfaction survey whereas the data on other tram services came from Passenger Focus's separate survey. The Policy Officer said she had tried to compare the findings but it had proved too difficult as the surveys used different methodologies, the tram networks themselves were very different and there was an in-built bias of positive satisfaction towards newer networks.

It was noted that it was regrettable that more direct comparisons could not be made but that the priority for London TravelWatch should be to compare satisfaction levels for London Tramlink with other London transport services. The Chief Executive welcomed Tramlink's use of the satisfaction data to help drive improvement.

9 Research into London Underground ticket office changes (PC048)

The Policy Officer presented an interim report on London TravelWatch's research into London Underground's proposals to close all its ticket offices. He explained the background to the proposals and London TravelWatch's research methodology. The questions focused on passengers' current use of ticket machines and ticket offices as well as any concerns they might have about using machines in the future. The Policy Officer said that the survey had been publicised in London print and social media as well as through posters in tube stations. He said that he had not yet undertaken station-by-station analysis but the immediate recommendations focused on the need for TfL to take a flexible approach.

The Chair said London TravelWatch intended to produce an initial response soon after Christmas then a more detailed analysis soon after.

Gareth Powell of Transport for London said TfL was continuing its own dialogue with relevant unions and was beginning to work on the detailed station rosters. This would take months to complete. The commitments to staff remained, with no

compulsory redundancies, no re-applications for jobs and no positions to be relocated more than 30 minutes from their current base.

The Chair noted that the safeguards were focused on staff but little was said about passengers. Mr Powell said that the entire project was intended to benefit passengers. He said that there had been a dramatic decline in the use of ticket offices for buying tickets and that staff in ticket offices were increasingly being used as sources of information. He wanted to break down the barriers between staff and passengers and confirmed that he intended all stations to be staffed at all times.

The Chair said that London TravelWatch's research showed there was a widespread misunderstanding of TfL's proposals, which suggested TfL still had a job to do in explaining the implications of the changes. Mr Powell agreed that communications to date had been very generalised and said he was working on detailed communications for individual stations and how passengers at each station would be affected.

A member asked whether the implementation of the proposals would be flexible to allow modifications should the changes not work in the way expected. Mr Powell said that the process of dialogue would continue and that the plans would be put together based in light of their own predictions. He said TfL committed to review the position over the next year and further in the future if necessary. However, he remained committed to the view that ticket offices should no longer be in stations. The Chair identified stations such as Farringdon and Elephant & Castle as requiring particular flexibility in light of changes to the network and local development plans.

The Chair said he was concerned about TfL's potential over-reliance on ticket machines and requiring passengers to use them. Shashi Verma of TfL said that several changes had already occurred including changing the screen layout to be more user-friendly and allowing machines to sell Oyster cards. The functions that used to be carried out at ticket offices, such as adding concessions or buying odd period season tickets, had been found new homes either on the ticket machines or online. All the functionality should be live across the network in the new year.

Mr Powell said the intention was to have staff near ticket machines to assist passengers making complicated transactions by using their own pin codes to access staff-only options. He was aware that passengers needed to be able to locate information points easily and that queues would need to be managed. He intended that there should be enough staff to respond to passengers.

The Chief Executive said there had been feedback that some passengers with disabilities would struggle to use the ticket machines and asked how TfL could give confidence to those passengers. Mr Powell said that TfL had convened stakeholder groups for passengers with accessibility needs that looked at a series of scenarios relating to journeys today and in the future. These had provided a lot of good feedback for station design and staff training.

The Chair asked whether the station categorisation was flexible and Mr Powell said it was. He said the categorisation was very general and the needs of each station would be considered individually, regardless of initial categorisation.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, asked about the intended future use of the closed ticket offices. He said that London TravelWatch research showed that in areas of outer London passengers were keen to see an expanded retail offer at stations and it was important if ticket offices were to be given over to retail it should be for the sort of activity that would benefit passengers. It was also important that TfL retained the ability to return former ticket offices to transport use in future if necessary. The Director, Policy and Investigation said that London TravelWatch expected to be consulted on disposal or lease arrangements in the same way as would happen for National Rail ticket offices.

Mr Powell welcomed the recognition of the need for some additional retail facilities. He said that the primary objective of London Underground was as a transport operator and its first consideration for the newly available space was whether a station needed more ticket machines as a result of the closure of the ticket office. Other options included providing more circulation space or staff facilities before considering commercial plans. TfL did not intend to turn every closed ticket office into a retail facility. Some local stations may have low commercial value and may be able to adopt community uses such as libraries. The Chair said that this highlighted the need for an open consultation process comparable to that used by National Rail.

A representative from the RMT union, speaking from the floor, said that the points it had previously raised remained unchanged. TfL intended to improve the customer experience by closing ticket offices but London TravelWatch research highlighted the value of the ticket offices to passengers. The research also showed that there would be 209 stations with fewer ticket selling outlets in future. The union remained concerned that some stations would have only one member of staff on duty during the running of the weekend overnight tube services. He was keen that TfL did not enter into very long leases with retailers for the vacant ticket offices as there should be opportunities to review and reverse these changes.

10 TfL fares announcement

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that London TravelWatch had been briefed on TfL's 2015 fares announcement on 11 November but that the briefing had omitted some of the key elements of the package, in particular in relation to increases in the cost of daily travelcards. It would have been helpful for TfL to provide information on the impact of these changes including the number of people affected.

Mr Verma said that the headline message in relation to fares was the simplification of the structure. TfL had not hidden the fact that the increase in the cost of one-day travelcards would cover the cost of other changes. Passengers who currently bought a one-day travelcard had the option to change to Oyster or contactless payments. He acknowledged that information on the removal of the off-peak cap should have been more prominent.

The Chair said that he understood that, in any changes to the fare structure, there would be losers but the gearing effect meant that the impact on some passengers would be very severe. A member asked whether the removal of the off-peak fare would have an impact on peak overcrowding. Mr Verma said that at present only 600 journeys could be identified as waiting for the 9.30 am cut-off. Otherwise there

was a smooth demand curve across the whole morning so there should not be a shift to more peak journeys with the removal of the cap. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said the removal of the cap might influence people to change their journey patterns but Mr Verma said decisions had to be made on the basis of evidence available.

The Chair thanked Mr Powell and Mr Verma for their response to London TravelWatch's report and answering questions from members.

11 Casework report (PC046)

The Casework Manager sent apologies for the meeting as she was required to remain in the office. A member questioned why Heathrow Express and Grand Central did not have specified periods within which to respond to London TravelWatch enquiries. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that they were not franchised railways and therefore did not have to give their responses within a particular timeframe.

Members noted that there had been some slippage in Network Rail's response times and agreed to continue to monitor this. They thanked the casework team for continuing to work on behalf of passengers and highlighting issues of concern.

12 Feedback questionnaire report (PC047)

The Chief Executive presented the report on feedback given by passengers about London TravelWatch's casework service. The Chair said that the 16% response rate was disappointing and that there may be too long a gap between closing a case and sending the questionnaire. It may also be worthwhile investigating incentives for responding such as being entered in a prize draw. Members asked whether it would be possible to change the method of responding, for example to introduce an online option, in order to increase response rates.

Action: Casework Manager

Members noted that the proportion of dissatisfied respondents had increased. The Chief Executive thought this may be due to the new policy of taking up more penalty fare appeal cases, which could be difficult to win and which might result in more complainants being unhappy with London TravelWatch's work. This may be linked to an increasing proportion of complainants who would not recommend London TravelWatch to anyone else.

13 Bakerloo line extension consultation (PC048)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented a report on London Underground's consultation about extending the Bakerloo underground line. He noted that, despite the other widespread benefits, the proposals would see the Hayes line lose its direct connection to London Bridge and Cannon Street and although there would be more trains available passengers would have to interchange to make their journeys in future. The Director, Policy and Investigation, briefed members on other aspects of the proposals and the improvements to transport infrastructure in the south east London area that could result.

The consultation document put forward a number of options but members agreed not to favour any particular detailed option in London TravelWatch's response. However, it was agreed that regardless of which route were chosen, London TravelWatch should argue for the re-opening of Camberwell station.

It was noted that supporting the extension in principle may result in London TravelWatch receiving opposition from those disbenefited by the scheme.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would respond to the consultation along the lines set out in the report, to support the concept of an extension of the Bakerloo line into South East London but not favouring either options 1a or 1b, except that if 1a were chosen a separate project to reopen Camberwell station on the Thameslink route should be pursued.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

14 Any other business

There was no other business.

15 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 the findings of London TravelWatch's research into proposed changes to London Underground ticket offices and cycle superhighways and also reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting