
Minutes

Agenda item: 5
Drafted: 09.04.19

Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 19 March 2019 at Europoint, 5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

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Present

Members

Jackie Ballard, Arthur Leathley (Chair), Karen McArthur, Laura Osborne (Items 1-8), Abdi Osman

In attendance

Andy Mellors Managing Director, South Western Railway (Item 10)
Jane Lee Head of Stakeholder and Communications (Item 10)

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
Vincent Stops Senior Policy Officer

Minutes

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

Apologies for absence had been received from Alan Benson and Safia Iman.

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 11 December 2018 were amended. The final sentence of paragraph four from section 8 was removed. The amended minutes were signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising (PC155)**

The Chair asked how the meeting with the Mayor of Watford had gone. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that it had been a very good meeting. The Chief Executive remarked that he had raised several questions with regards to the Underground. They had agreed to have a follow up conversation by phone in June which would be fed back to the Board at the meeting in July.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that the meeting on Euston station that had been held on 14 March with representatives from Network Rail and West Midlands Railway had been positive. A suggestion that had been raised at the previous Policy Committee of turning around trains at Watford Junction was being considered in Network Rail's infrastructure renewal plan and discussions in general had been positive. The Chair asked whether London TravelWatch had been asked to be a part of a formal steering group involved in the Euston station planning. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied it had and said he would come back to him on the specifics after the meeting, as he needed to confirm its status.

ACTION: Director, Policy and Investigation

5 **Key activities (PC156)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation commented that the last item of page 2 listed London TravelWatch's quarterly meeting with Arriva Rail London. He suggested that he update the Board as to the current status of the London Overground ticket office closures. The Director reminded members that of the 51 ticket offices that had been proposed to be closed, the Board had objected to 24. This was on the basis that they exceeded the Secretary of State's threshold of 12 transactions per hour. He explained that subsequent to the decision, which was made during the November Board meeting, two stations were then withdrawn.

The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that the first station, Kensington (Olympia), was withdrawn as it was later found to fall below the 12 transaction threshold. The second station, Brondesbury, was reluctantly withdrawn. He explained that the station had been identified for possible funding under the Access for All scheme, which would include putting lifts into the station in order to give it step-free access. As there was nowhere else other than the ticket office for those lifts to be located, London TravelWatch had agreed not to object to its closure. The Chief Executive commented that the decision about the two additional stations had been included as a post meeting note in the minutes for the November meeting.

The Director remarked that there had been a brief mention of the ticket office closures in the quarterly meeting with Arriva Rail London in March and that further information would be forthcoming in June. The Chief Executive remarked that although they would not be able to formally update the Board until June, staff would send members a note if they were given any news prior to then.

A member asked how the meeting had gone with Andy Thomas. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that he had taken over the role of Managing Director for Network Rail's Wessex Route, though also had other national roles. He remarked that Mr Thomas had appeared focused to get the route back to a reliable service. Infrastructure upgrades had gone according to plan, and there was now a greater focus on the passenger, which mirrored what Andrew Haines had said to the Board in November.

The same member asked about the coach related issues that had been discussed with Bus Users UK. The Chief Executive replied that it had been a meeting that had come about following the Interchange Matters seminar that had been held in February. Dominic West from Hackney Council had raised a point that people were unaware that there were coach stops they could use in order to get a coach to Stansted Airport. She remarked that although London TravelWatch did not have a remit over coaches, it did have one over TfL coach stops and suggested that it was a mode that could assist with people interchanging to London's airports.

A member asked what had been discussed in relation to the extension of Pay As You Go in the meeting with Govia Thameslink Railway. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that the Policy team was preparing a paper for the next Board meeting on a proposed response to the extension. He remarked that discussions had been around how GTR wanted to position themselves in relation to it. He added that it would affect a large proportion of their customers and would bring a host of benefits to them.

The Chair asked if the issues around Victoria Coach station would be something the organisation would be coming back to in future. The Director replied that London TravelWatch would have an opportunity to raise it closer to the time when the lease was due to expire. He commented that TfL had considered a site at Royal Oak as a potential coach hub. However, it had since been decided that it would not be appropriate and they were now looking for an alternative location.

A member asked how many people had attended the Interchange Matters seminar that had been hosted at City Hall in February. The Chief Executive replied that there had been over 40 external attendees to the event from across the industry. The previous Deputy Chief Executive of London TravelWatch had been in

attendance and had commented on the high calibre of people that the organisation had managed to invite. The Operations and Communications Manager added that London TravelWatch had received over 35,000 impressions on Twitter in relation to the event. The Chair said that it was a good event and exactly the type of thing that the organisation should be doing.

6 Bus occupant safety (PC157)

The Senior Policy Officer stated that London TravelWatch had commissioned Loughborough University to do some research into accidents that occurred on buses across London. As well as bringing the necessary funding for the project, the organisation was also able to leverage the various relationships that it had with bus operators across the capital. This process was coming towards its conclusion and an event had been held which had presented the research to an audience from across the bus industry. The aim of the meeting was to try to discover whether the suggestions to improve safety on buses could feasibly be implemented. He remarked that overall feedback had been very positive and the day had been a great success.

The Senior Policy Officer commented that feedback from the day would be implemented in the final report that would be produced by the University, and London TravelWatch would also be producing its own version of the research. He commented that there had been discussions with the Road Safety Trust who had expressed an interest in publicising the lessons learnt from the research to national operators. He added that he had been in discussion with Anthony Smith at Transport Focus about possibly holding another event to demonstrate the findings to national operators.

The Chair asked when it was likely that the report would be published. The Senior Policy Officer replied that it was scheduled to be completed at the end of the month. A member asked whether there was a list of 'quick wins' that London TravelWatch could publicise. The Senior Policy Officer replied that once the report was finalised there would be a number of things that could be implemented on immediately to improve safety, which the organisation could promote. There would also be other reforms which would take longer to implement but could also be publicised as they were introduced onto the network.

7 Casework Q3 performance report (PC158)

The Casework Manager presented her casework performance report for Q3 and asked members if they had any questions with regards to its contents. The Chair asked whether she had noticed any changes in the number of cases since the start of 2019, following the introduction of the Rail Ombudsman in November. The Casework Manager replied that her team had not seen a 'huge decrease in cases' and there had been an uplift in cases received from Eurostar following the industrial action that was taking place in France. She commented that when comparing the figure to Q3 casework was down, though when compared to Q4 the previous year numbers appeared to be around the same level.

A member asked whether London TravelWatch had a formal or informal agreement with the Rail Ombudsman. The Casework Manager replied that the Ombudsman

was required to pass on cases to London TravelWatch which fell outside of its remit. However, she remarked that she was in regular contact with the Ombudsman and was helping to advise with the appeals process which was strengthening a good working relationship.

The Chair suggested that Transport Focus had a concern with regard to the data that was coming through from the Ombudsman. He asked if the casework team was experiencing similar problems. The Casework Manager replied that she was in regular dialogue with Kate at Transport Focus who was due to come in to speak to her about the issue. Together they would compile a list of the data they required from the Ombudsman, which would then need to be agreed by the RDG for this to be granted.

8 National Rail Q3 performance report (PC159)

The Policy Officer (KB) presented the Network Rail Q3 performance report and asked members if they had any questions on it. The Chair asked what she would ask South Western Railway about their performance after compiling the information in her report. The Policy Officer said that she would ask what the operator was doing to hold Network Rail to account as some of the problems were outside their control. She stated if they did not work closely with one another then performance was likely to continue to deteriorate.

A member asked whether there was a service level agreement in place to ensure that operators were refunded for disruption caused by Network Rail. The Policy Officer replied that there was, though it did not appear to be having an impact in improving the disruption caused by Network Rail. She commented that the current infrastructure was old and needed updating, thus a proactive plan in carrying out the engineering works should be in place. The member asked whether the fault for poor performance lay with South Western Railway or Network Rail. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that the railway industry had a 'huge amount of bureaucracy' which specified who was responsible for causing delay and appropriated the cost accordingly.

In relation to South Western Railway, the Policy Officer said there were a number of reasons for why their performance had declined. These included moving their control office to Basingstoke, infrastructure issues, longer trains and an increase in passenger numbers, meaning dwell time was extended. The Chair asked who the main user groups that covered their area were. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that it was the Windsor Line Passenger Association, which covered routes from Waterloo out towards Reading.

9 TfL Q3 performance report (PC160)

The Senior Policy Officer presented his TfL Q3 performance report and asked members if they had any questions about it. The Chair asked whether TfL had given an explanation for why they had dropped their Journey Time Reliability measure. The Senior Policy officer replied that they had not and said officers would be meeting Gareth Powell, Managing Director for Surface Transport in due course to discuss their reasons behind the decision, as well as other issues that fell under his remit. He added that London TravelWatch could use the data that measured traffic speed

across the city instead, though this was not as accurate. The Chair asked why traffic speed was not a good replacement for Journey Time Reliability. The Senior Policy Officer said that the measure only focused on speed rather than congestion and the reliability of services.

A member asked how much of traffic on London's roads was made up of cars vs vans and lorries. The Senior Policy Officer replied that the majority of traffic would be cars though there were an increasing number of vans on the roads, which were replacing HGVs. He added that vans were also increasingly being used for internet shopping deliveries, which are increasingly popular with the public.

The Senior Policy Officer turned to the data on the volume of road works that was being carried out across the city. He remarked that it was positive that TfL was controlling the time it was taking to work on the roads though the targets that they had set themselves were 'generous'. The Chair said that TfL should be pushed to improve on the figures as they looked 'consistently easy' to reach.

The Senior Policy Officer stated that bus journey speeds were getting worse. On page 24 was a list of the poorest performing routes, and staff would be producing a report into the subject in due course. A member asked if there was anything that the buses in question shared in common with one another. The Senior Policy Officer replied that they tended not to be run by the same company. He commented that TfL was often aware why there was a problem on routes and had a good awareness of the problems on the network.

10 Andy Mellors, Managing Director of South Western Railway

Andy Mellors, Managing Director of South Western Railway thanked London TravelWatch for the opportunity to address them and gave a presentation on the organisation's current status. He explained that there had been a number of reasons for poor performance over the 19 months that they had been running the franchise, including particular spells of extreme weather.

A member commented that although he had categorised weather as 'extreme' it was likely that this type of weather would become more frequent in future. Another member agreed and also suggested that some weather events, such as leaves on the line, were something that could be predicted and should be planned for in advance. Mr Mellors agreed and said that the organisation had a number of different measures it put in place in preparation for each season of the year.

Mr Mellors directed the Board to a graph which showed the daily Public Performance Measure (PPM) for Period 12. It showed that on good days they were hitting figures in excess of 90%. He remarked that there had also been periods of disruption which included trespass incidents. A member commented that although South Western were performing well on some days, for the majority of the time they were not hitting 90% and in most cases were way below the measure. Ms Lee remarked that the organisation had recently invested in the Land Sheriffs scheme in order to reduce the number of trespass incidents, which they were aware was particularly affecting their performance. Mr Mellors said the initiative had started the previous month and it would take a short time for the benefits from it to feed through.

The Chair stated that he was concerned by the variability in the PPM measure and said that having figures consistently at 70% would be 'a dream world' compared to the current situation. He asked that rather than aiming for targets of 90% and above the organisation tried to iron out the variability in the figures. The Chief Executive asked at which stations the new platform management trials would be taking place. Ms Lee replied that she would send across the names of the stations after the meeting.

ACTION: Committee and Public Liaison Officer

A member asked whether the previous franchisee had the issues with performance that South Western Railway was currently experiencing. Mr Mellors replied that it had and referred the member to the evidence contained within Sir Michael Holden's review into the route going back to 2010/11. The Chief Executive asked whether Network Rail was doing enough to prevent trespassers on the lines. Mr Mellors remarked that Network Rail had a vital role to play with regards to trespassers. In terms of South Western's role, they had targeted particularly hotspots where trespassers were likely to get on the tracks and would station their Land Sheriffs staff at those locations. He added that the organisation also had a strong relationship with the British Transport Police who also had an obvious involvement with reducing trespass incidents.

A member asked how soon he expected the improvements that South Western were putting in to improve performance to start taking effect. Mr Mellors replied that he expected that there would be better results in the PPM in Period 13 than that of the previous year. He added that there were signs of 'green shoots' appearing in terms of performance and that there were some 'big things in the locker' including the introduction of the joint performance improvement centre which would provide greater analysis of when issues arose.

Mr Mellors turned to a slide explaining the organisation's adoption of delay repay. The Casework Manager replied that London TravelWatch had received feedback from passengers that were upset that South Western had removed the passenger charter compensation when they had introduced delay repay. Mr Mellors remarked that the organisation had introduced a delay repay account which made the process of making claims easier for passengers. Ms Lee commented that train guards were also told in times of disruption to make people aware of their ability to make a claim, which had not always been the case with the passenger charter compensation.

Mr Mellors directed the Board to a slide on rail replacement services. He declared that 75% of the vehicles would be GPS tracked, enabling passengers to map out where their rail replacement service was in real-time and plan their journey accordingly. The Chief Executive asked whether all rail replacement services would be fully accessible. Ms Lee commented that it was the company's intention that they were, though on some occasions they may be forced to send a vehicle that was not fully accessible. The Chief Executive asked whether the GPS finder would make it clear to passengers if the vehicle was accessible or not. Ms Lee said that they would investigate the matter and come back with a response.

ACTION: Committee and Public Liaison Officer

The Casework Manager asked whether they would be able to access historic data from the GPS tracker. Ms Lee replied that there was an option to do so.

The Chair stated that passenger satisfaction levels with South Western Railway were down to 73%. He asked why this was the case. Mr Mellors replied that this had been affected by the performance issues that had occurred on their route. Ms Lee remarked that the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) was done over a short period of time, which in this case coincided with the time when the organisation was experiencing its worst levels of performance.

The Chair commented that South Western Railway had been running the franchise for 19 months and had not met the levels of performance expected from the company. He asked Mr Mellors whether he felt he had let passengers down due to their poor record. Mr Mellors replied that South Western had signed up to a number of obligations and had delivered on some, such as the GPS tracking for rail replacement services. He acknowledged that performance was several percentage points lower than had been expected. Mr Mellors added that the late implementation of the December 2018 timetable had delayed improvements to the service, but said that performance was the 'number one priority' for the organisation. Ms Lee commented that they had also been affected by a prolonged industrial dispute.

A member asked how South Western Railway was planning to resolve the industrial dispute with the RMT Union. Mr Mellors replied that he had no wish to declare his negotiating position publicly though commented that it was positive the proposed strikes in February had been suspended. He stated that the organisation had committed to investing in trains where the operation of the doors no longer needed to be carried out by the train guard, which would speed up boarding times. A meeting was planned within the next week where it was hoped a resolution could be found.

11 Any other business

There was no other business.

12 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.