



05 October 2011

Mr B Johnson
Mayor of London
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mayor Johnson,

Fares and Tickets from January 2012

Thank you for your recent letter advising us of the changes you are proposing to implement to Transport for London (TfL) fares in January 2012.

London TravelWatch welcomes the greater transparency that you have shown in relation to your fares decision. The publication of the advice that you received from TfL on this matter is most welcome. Previously, this has not been either available publicly or transmitted to us as the statutory consumer watchdog.

We also welcome the fact that you have not initiated structural changes to fares at this stage. In the past, structural changes such as the withdrawal of the zone 2-6 Travelcard resulted in substantial increases in fares for some users, which was not reflected in the published headline increases in fares, because it was a structural change.

These positive developments, are however, overshadowed by our concern that the level of increase in fares that you are proposing will have an impact on passengers, who are at the same time not seeing any real increase in their incomes. We believe, that for many on lower incomes fares will become unaffordable. For the remainder, if these increases are to be tolerated by passengers, they will expect the service levels to be maintained and reliability of the services they use to improve, so that they get some value added in return for the higher fares they are being asked to pay.

We are also concerned by the numbers and amounts of money taken from Oyster Pay As You Go users in the form of 'maximum journey charges' arising from 'incomplete' journeys. You will be aware of our recent research report that highlighted this issue – which I attach for your information. We acknowledge that since publication TfL has responded by introducing the 'autofill' arrangement that calculates the correct fare in relation to 'unfinished' journeys, and by providing simpler statements for passengers. We note too that since the publication of our report, an additional 15,000 passengers per month are making the effort to resolve journeys for which they have been overcharged.

However, despite these positive developments, the total number of such 'unresolved journeys' continues to rise. We therefore look to TfL, to not only address the 'system issues' but also the human failures and comprehension issues that lead people to incur these 'maximum fares' in the first instance. This requires serious engagement by TfL and train operators to implement the recommendations of our research.

There are other proposals that we would wish you to consider:

- We suggest that you withdraw the proposed increase in the single cash bus fare from £2.20 to £2.30, but instead raise the single zone 1 tube Oyster fare by 10p to £2.10 – at present many journeys which would otherwise involve the use of two buses in central London are cheaper to do by tube. We believe this would give people a financial incentive to use buses in central London, and thus help reduce crowding on the tube.
- Extend the discount given to Railcard holders on Oyster Pay As You Go journeys to include peak fares between 1600 and 1900 Monday to Friday, in line with the practice for paper tickets. We believe that this would help reduce queues at ticket offices at these busy times.
- Charge off-peak fares between 1600 and 1900 on journeys toward central London in zones 9, 8 and 7 to 2 in line with the current policy for journeys to zone 1 from these zones, as this creates an anomaly.

We are, as ever, very keen to engage with you on matters of interest to passengers. Should you have any queries on this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Grant

Chair