
Minutes

Agenda item: 9
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Author: Luke Muskett, Communications Officer

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28 June 2022

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Present

Members

Alan Benson, Priya Khullar, Tiffany Lam, Arthur Leathley (Chair), Karen McArthur, Laura Osborne, Susan Stockwell

Guests

Andy Byford Commissioner for Transport, Transport for London (item 6)

Secretariat in attendance

Emma Gibson	Chief Executive
Susan James	Head of Casework
Shahid Mohammed	Finance Manager (item 8)
Luke Muskett	Communications Officer

1. Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest to declare.

4. Chair's activities and Transport Focus update

The Chair said that Nigel Stevens had become the new Chair of Transport Focus and was keen to meet with officers and members of London TravelWatch as soon as it was convenient.

5. Communications update (LTW688)

The Chief Executive presented the report to the Board and gave a summary of some of the key highlights. A member asked when the new Head of Communications would be in post. The Chief Executive said the recruitment process had begun but it was in the early stages as Richard's required notice period had only been one month, reducing to three weeks due to untaken holiday owed to him. She said that for the next meeting she would add a paragraph to her Chief Executive's report to inform the Board on London TravelWatch's communications activities whilst the Head of Communications position was vacant.

ACTION: Chief Executive

6. Andy Byford, Commissioner of Transport for London

Andy Byford, the Commissioner of Transport for London, joined the meeting and gave an overview of the state of TfL as an organisation including the financial challenges it had been going through since the start of the pandemic.

The Chair asked Mr Byford whether TfL was considering increasing fares if it was unable to secure the level of funding it had asked for from central government. Mr Byford replied that it was a tool that TfL could use, though he and the Mayor shared the view that raising fares in the long-term would be self-defeating as it would price people off the network. He added that TfL was overly reliant on fares which had a farebox recovery ratio of 72%. This was compared to other cities like New York

where the farebox ratio was around 38%. Mr Byford said that the pandemic had 'viciously exposed the frailties' of having such a high reliance on fares revenue.

A member asked what TfL had learnt from the Tube strikes that had taken place recently and what the prospects were of further strikes on the network in future. Mr Byford said that the real-time information that was provided to passengers during industrial action needed to be improved, though said that this was a difficult thing to get right. In terms of the potential for future strikes, Mr Byford said that there were currently no further strikes planned and that TfL's plans to reduce staff would be made by natural attrition rather than through redundancies.

Several members congratulated Mr Byford on the opening of the Elizabeth Line. They asked whether for the Elizabeth Line stations that connected with other parts of the network (providing them with step-free access where this was not previous the case) could be kept open beyond their current 11pm close time. Mr Byford said that he was happy to look at them on a case-by-case basis though his priority would be to extend the opening hours of the Elizabeth Line beyond 11pm as soon as possible.

The Chief Executive said that there was a perception that bus driver fatigue was not taken as seriously within TfL as other parts of the network such as the Tube or trams. She asked whether this was accurate. Mr Byford said that he had also noticed this perception though did not think it was a fair reflection of reality. He went on to list a number of measures that TfL had in place to mitigate the risk of drivers becoming fatigued.

A member asked what other barriers, besides finances, were preventing dangerous junctions from being made safer. Mr Byford said that without the buy-in from other parties, including local boroughs, at best schemes to improve dangerous junctions would be delayed and in the worst-case scenario they would 'grind to a halt'. He said that in such cases having London TravelWatch advocate for the scheme would be very helpful.

A member asked how highly TfL prioritised dealing with problems around personal safety and hate crime that passengers experienced when travelling around London. Mr Byford said that it was one of TfL's top priorities. He said that TfL had staff specifically hired to improve issues around personal safety and hate crime and were using a number of tools in order to improve the situation including partnerships with the police service, high quality CCTV, training, and public campaigns.

A member asked if TfL would consider joining the National Rail Passenger Assist program so that people that required that service, particularly when making cross-

London journeys, had the reassurance that they could reach their destination on time. Mr Byford said that TfL currently had no plans to join the scheme but said he would be happy to discuss this further with the member to try and find a way to provide that reassurance to people that needed assistance to travel.

7. Chief Executive's report (LTW686)

The Chief Executive gave a summary of her report to the Board. There was discussion around the ongoing TfL bus consultation with one member having some intelligence about services being affected in the area of London he lived. The Chief Executive asked if he could put the information he had in an email and send it through to the team.

ACTION: Deputy Chair

8. Finance report (LTW689)

The Finance Manager presented his report which was noted by the Board. There was a question raised about the risk of London TravelWatch being financially exposed by higher levels of inflation. The Finance Manager said that for the current financial year the level of exposure was fairly low as things such as energy costs had already been purchased at a fixed price by their supplier. He cautioned, however, that the situation could change in the next financial year.

9. Casework report (LTW687)

The Head of Casework gave a summary of her report. The Chair asked, due to the time between the next Board, if the next quarterly report could be circulated to the Board once the data was available and the report had been written up.

ACTION: Head of Casework

10. Any other business

There was no further business to discuss.

11. Resolution to move into confidential session

It was resolved, under section 15(2)(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the item(s) to be discussed, it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded for a section of the meeting.