
Minutes

Agenda item 4a
Drafted 30.6.09

Minutes of a meeting of the Board held at the Chamber, City Hall on 30 June 2009

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Present

Members

David Barry; Onjali Bodrul; Gail Engert; Daniel Francis; Sharon Grant (Chair of London TravelWatch);
Sophia Lambert; David Leibling; Teena Lashmore; Sarah Pond, Andrew Probert

Guests

Chris Burchell	Managing Director, Southern Railway
Beverley Hall	Head of Communications for Surface Transport, Transport for London (TfL)
Mike Keegan	Strategy Manager, Planning & Policy, TfL
Howard Read	Bid Leader, Southern Railway

Staff

Carmel Cannon	Senior Committee Administrator (minutes)
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Bryan Davey	Director, Research and Development
Mark Donoghue	Committee Administrator;
Vincent Stops	Safety and Policy Advisor; Streets and Surface Transport Officer

20 members of the public

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre meeting announcements

Ms Grant welcomed members, public and guests to the meeting,

2 Apologies for absence and declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Lorna Reith, Deputy Chair of the Board. Kevin Davis had given notice that he would be late.

David Barry made a declaration of interest as a member of the Board of FinFuture, a Finsbury-Park based regeneration body. <http://www.finfuture.co.uk/>. The Chair invited the public to review members' standing declarations of interest on the website.

3 Chair's activities and report from Passenger Focus Board

3.1. Chair's activities

Ms Grant had continued on the schedule of routine meetings with a range of stakeholders. She had included a meeting with TfL on taxi licensing issues. She had also met with Chris Bolt, Chair of the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) on a number of issues. Mr Bolt was retiring from that post although he would continue in his post as Public Private Partnership Arbiter. The Chair took this opportunity to him well and to welcome his replacement Anna Walker.

She had also met with TfL's Streets and Surface team to discuss Smoothing the Traffic in particular (see also minute 8), and with Lord Adonis, named as Secretary of State for Transport shortly after the meeting, and separately with the Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee of the London Assembly, to discuss London TravelWatch issues.

3.2. Report from Passenger Focus Board

David Leibling reported on the previous meeting of the Passenger Focus Board, at which the annual report and accounts had been recorded, and the implications of the new South Central Franchise discussed.

4 Minutes

It was noted that that the first line of minute 9, paragraph 6 should read that pedestrians 'may' not see motorcyclist rather than 'would' not see them, and that the fourth line should read 'TfL rather than 'we??'. With these amendments the minutes were agreed and signed for the record.

The minutes of meetings of the Executive Group held on 23 April 2009 and 14 May 2009 were noted.

5 Matters arising (LTW 312)

Regarding paragraph 2.3, on TfL Christmas information line opening hours; the Chair commented that advice lines were more likely to be used by those without internet access, and that for this reason alone the information line should be open throughout the Christmas period. It was agreed that this matter would be brought back to TfL for further consideration. It was also agreed that the glossary in the members' hand book would be regularly updated, and that glossaries would be added to reports as necessary.

Action : Committee Services

6 Actions taken (LTW 313)

The report was noted. Members were asked to confirm with the Committee Administrator by next board meeting to say whether they wanted to continue to receive email copies of the London Bus Service Permit Bulletin.

Action : Members

7 Future meetings (LTW 316)

It was agreed to change some dates and to circulate the final document as soon as possible.

Action : Chief Executive

8 Smoothing the Traffic (LTW 314)

Ms Grant welcomed Beverley Hall, Head of Communications for Surface Transport, TfL, and London TravelWatch Streets and Surface Transport Officer Vincent Stops to introduce this paper, which addressed the concept and challenges of 'smoothing the traffic'. David Leibling reminded the meeting of his interest as Chair of the Red Route Forum for this item.

Members expressed disappointment that the original TfL consultation process appeared to have been watered down to a passive, online approach and that the plan to hold a conference seemed to have been abandoned. Ms Hall responded that the online forum was the start of the debate, and that the possibility of a conference was still under discussion. There had been a delay with the overall communications strategy, which was designed to include the many stakeholders in the process. Ms Hall also pointed out that this project was tactically linked to the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and that towards the end of 2009, TfL would be working with borough colleagues on local issues. She undertook to provide further details of the exact timeline of the project within four weeks of this meeting.

Action: Committee Services

The Mayor's Transport Strategy stated that the road network state of repair was 'expected to decline' and that bus networks were also 'expected to decline'. A member queried what effect this would have on increasing the shift to more efficient modes. Ms Hall confirmed that the state of repair of the roads was a factor when allocating funds across the network, and affected all street modes. The member concerned felt that the text sounded deceptive - that there was a general dialogue, but with caveats. Other members voiced concern that if congestion on the roads increased, it would impact on the buses, and if roads were left in states of disrepair then it would further impact on all road users.

Another member, referring to paragraph 2.8.2 in the paper, asked whether TfL kept a list of London's road bottlenecks, whether they were prioritised, and the estimated cost for easing them. Ms Hall responded that there was a priority scheme on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), through which bottlenecks were managed. In practice, removing one bottleneck often impacted on the next, so TfL took the view that the key to success in terms of traffic flow was to consider the network holistically. Therefore bottlenecks were managed in terms of groups of lights rather than single junctions, and Ms Hall quoted research and consultations which reflected that people want reliable and predictable journeys rather than faster journeys - even if that includes (predictable) bottlenecks.

Queries were then raised about how TfL works with local councils to manage the road network, when councils may have differing levels of funding available and differing priorities. Ms Hall pointed out that boroughs now had the opportunity to target their funding through the Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) process. TfL appreciated that this was not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach but maintained that local solutions were the most successful, fixing the network little by little, taking into account local funding issues along the way.

Members also raised queries on TfL's approach to dissemination of road travel information: one asked whether TfL had considered launching a radio station to broadcast live traffic control news. TfL had not considered this, but does work with the highways agency and most of its travel information is put out through third parties. Another commented that live road travel news was difficult to find on the TfL website, and Ms Hall undertook to look into the navigation on the website as it should be clearly signed under 'road users'.

Action : Committee Services

There were no further questions and Ms Hall and the Streets and Surface Transport Officer were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

9 London TravelWatch response to Mayor's Transport Strategy statement of intent (LTW 315)

Ms Grant welcomed Mike Keegan, Strategy Manager, Planning & Policy, TfL to the meeting. Vincent Stops introduced the report which was a draft response for comment by members.

9.1. General comments

One member commented that, even with the maturity of current transport networks, there was still room to improve interchanges, particularly where rail or tube lines crossed. The Tim Bellenger added that the challenge was one of funding and political will: both were required to ensure progress with the transport infrastructure projects already committed to before new works could be scheduled. He also reminded members that this Board had previously made a number of recommendations to industry, particularly about chordal links. He urged that London TravelWatch should expect the strategy to include a list of projects by mode and benefit to passengers, and by cost benefit, and the practical possibilities of interchanges would also incorporated into the response.

Mr Stops directed members to the paragraph in the report entitled 'small is beautiful' (3.4.2) which listed similar projects for consideration.

Another member commented that there were many aspects of this document which highlighted the need for collective working across many different partnerships, and this should be highlighted in the response.

Ms Grant expressed concern that the Statement of Intent made no mention of London being a 24-hour city and the need for the transport system to reflect that. She continued that it did not include any discussion on fairness and democratic planning for transport in the future, and the thorny issue of who paid. Critical questions such as the extent to which Londoners should be paying for the infrastructure (as opposed to national subsidy), and to what extent travellers should be paying for others' subsidised fares were crucial and London TravelWatch would like to see these questions included in a transport strategy in the future. She also said that an important theme of such a document ought to be about how the public was to be systematically involved in decisions about transport in the future. The voice of the travelling public needs to be heard, at all levels of decision making and this issue do not seem to be adequately addressed in this document.

Mr Keegan agreed that these were all serious issues, which in many respects were beyond the scope of the TfL business plan. Fares policy was an incredibly complicated area, but some things other than revenue collection could be explored e.g. peak/offpeak pricing or facilitating home working, with more flexible travelcard systems which would not penalise season ticket holders for working at home. TfL planned to consult stakeholders (including London TravelWatch) on this in October 2009.

A member then asked about the timescale of the strategy, which is to 2031; and whether this would incorporate changes over time. That would be an obvious mechanism for including stakeholders along the way. In terms of finances, it would be useful to explore development of the strategy in those terms. Mr Keegan agreed and said there would be an opportunity for engagement with stakeholders through the sub-regional delivery processes.

This discussion also raised the question of whether the Board supported any modal shift which benefitted of the overall transport network (albeit biased), or gave equal support to each mode to encourage a 'perfect choice' for every individual. Members undertook to discuss this in more detail at a later date.

9.2. Specific amendments to the response

On paragraph 3.1.10, regarding value for money), members asked that this point be made very clearly.

On paragraph 3.1.11, members asked that the importance of maintaining momentum of work on access to health services access be underlined. There followed discussion on accessibility, and a member made the point that there was a link between accessibility and realistic planning. For those unable to use the tube, buses were a real priority yet the Statement of Intent did not appear to address this issue at all.

On paragraph 3.2.1, regarding fixed public transport links being viewed more favourably by stakeholders, officers noted that whilst the public shared this preference, local councillors were often not keen to have to maintain fixed links or to develop

infrastructure around them to support the required level of investment. The Chair suggested that this paragraph could be more clearly worded.

On paragraph 3.3.1, it was suggested that this could read that we 'hope' they will work together.

On paragraph 3.4, a member suggested that more information about why people do not use transport could be useful in looking at this question.

Mr Keegan confirmed that TfL does have a lot of data regarding trip making - almost half of all trips each day are made in outer London and half of those are by car.

Ms Grant thanked everyone for their contributions. The London Assembly had requested an extension of the deadline for this paper, and Mr Keegan agreed that an extra week was acceptable also for London TravelWatch. Tim Bellenger would amend the paper to include all suggested amendments in this minute.

Action : Director, Research and Development

10 New South Central Railway Franchise

Chris Burchell and Howard Read, (respectively Managing Director and Bid Leader, Southern Railway) were welcomed to the meeting. The full presentation to accompany this item may be found on the London TravelWatch website.

Tim Bellenger, Director, Research and Development, introduced the item with the remark that the unique and innovative point about this franchise was that London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus had been so closely involved in the consultation process, and that the franchise would provide the equivalent of the underground network to south London. He added that within the GLA area, TfL had contributed towards the cost of the extra staff required to run the franchise, and that all stations would be staffed from first to last trains, with the exceptions of Clapham High Street, Wandsworth Road, Belmont, and Banstead.

Mr Burchell outlined the scope of the franchise, due to start in September 2009 and run through to 2015. The bids had been specifically built to meet the invitation to tender as set by the DfT. It was a relatively short franchise, with no new build of trains, but there was still the commitment for significant investment of £70m, including investment in stations. The key emphasis however was to make a real step-change in customer service, and Southern had made close reference to the National Passenger Survey.

The franchise would include the standardisation of information provision; deep cleans at all stations; increases in frequency; and upgrading platform capacity to enable 10 coach trains in the peaks rather than the current 8. The aim was to have 100% closed-circuit television coverage for all stations. Southern was also looking to create more open space in the coaches so that the combined seating and standing room would increase capacity for shorter distance journeys. Ticketing systems would be ITSO-compatible and Oyster-compatible.

Overall, it was a 'third generation (3G)' franchise, the first of its type, and posed the opportunity to increase passenger focussed work, supported by a 1000-strong passenger panel. The detail of this was still to be confirmed, but probably it would be a 'passenger pulse check' via electronic engagement.

The Chair was concerned that if the 1000-strong passenger panel was engaged primarily electronically, it would exclude those who did not use the internet, and possibly therefore skew the results. She asked that Southern return to the Board with more detail at a later date. Mr Burchell accepted this point and the invitation, but assured the Board that electronic engagement would not be the only method used.

Janet Cooke, Chief Executive was pleased to note the focus on customer service and improvement, and the timetable changes which in the past has caused such issues with customer dissatisfaction. Mr Burchell responded that there were a variety of reasons for the increased passenger issues, upon which Southern had carefully reflected and reviewed its processes accordingly, the results of which would show in the new franchise. The Chief Executive then asked about feedback from all sections of the community and whether South Central ran 'meet the manager' events at all stations. Mr Burchell confirmed that there was a plan to expand on these as at present they only occurred at London Bridge and Victoria.

The Director, Research and Development, asked about timetabling on the West London Line; it appeared that the SLC3 (service level commitment no 3) intention was to revert to the previous Clapham Junction to Milton Keynes service. London TravelWatch had commissioned three pieces of research to prove the necessity of this route and would like assurance that this crossover would be looked at again at SLC level. Mr Burchell responded that South Central had contracted a set of timetables that the DfT specified, and the bid was submitted based on these. Mr Read added that the East/South Croydon to Watford Junction, or Milton Keynes services were still in place, so the cross link was conserved; the timetable had been structured so that changes would all be made in 2010.

A member asked about working with London Boroughs and local communities. Mr Burchell responded that Southern planned to engage more as the franchise was delivered. He was also asked why 93.2 percent of trains 'on time' was thought acceptable, to which he responded that this figure was an average across all trains, every day, all year. Given that Southern runs over 2000 trains per day this was an improvement on previous years.

A member asked how train capacity issues would affect the carriage of bicycles on trains. Mr Burchell acknowledged that this is a tricky issue, particularly on longer distance trains. Only folding bikes were accepted, but Southern did plan to install more cycle spaces at stations.

The Chair thanked Mr Burchell and wished Southern well with the delivery of the franchise. She invited them to return in a year's time to give more detail and report on the progress of the passenger panel.

11 Annual Review

The Chief Executive introduced the annual report, and both she and the Chair congratulated the Communications Officer on her work on its production.

The report covers the last 12 months up to March 2009, and incorporated the changes to the reporting structure which had been made to reflect the London Assembly's reporting structure. It sets out London TravelWatch's vision for London, the research work undertaken and the issues raised throughout the year. We investigated nearly

1500 appeals, commented on over 300 alterations to bus routes, and received nearly 1000 representations on ticket office closures.

The report was formally received, and appreciation expressed to all those involved in drafting, designing and preparing it.

12 Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

13 Resolution to move into confidential session

The meeting 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 is desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded for the remainder of the meeting.

14 Glossary

DfT	Department for Transport
GLA	Greater London Authority
ITSO	Integrated Smartcard Organisation
LIPs	Local Implementation Plans each Council is required by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to produce a Local Implementation Plan (LIP), a document that outlines how the Council intends to implement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy during the period 2005/06 to 2010/11.
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation
PCO	Public Carriage Office the black taxi licensing body
SLC3	Service Level Commitment number 3. This is part of the specification of a franchise agreement related to timetabling and set by the DfT. The existing timetable when the new franchisee takes over is inherited as SLC1, and each time the DfT requires a new timetable, the numbers increase.
TLRN	Transport for London Road Network 'red route' roads managed by Transport for London' rather than the local council