
Minutes

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Agenda item 4b
Drafted : 16 July 2009

Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Executive Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 16 July 2009

Present

Sharon Grant (SG)

Chair

Lorna Reith (LR)

Deputy Chair

Sarah Pond (SP)

Gail Engert (GE)

David Leibling (DL)

Janet Cooke (JC)

Chief Executive

Patti Tobin (PT)

Director, Finance & Personnel

Peter Ellis (PE)

Senior Finance Officer (minute 5)

Tim Bellenger (TB)

Director, Research & Development (minute 7)

Amy Waters (AW)

Chief Executive/Chair's PA (temporary) – Note taker

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 18 June 2009

After discussion the minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

SP stated that the turnaround of committee meeting minutes continued to be a problem as demonstrated with the papers for the last Consumer Affairs Committee, which occurred on the 8 July and the papers would not be available for comment before she goes on holiday. There was universal concern that by the time Members received their actions they would not have the opportunity to implement them. LR said she had the same problem with the Transport Services Committee where she waited a month to receive the minutes and was then chased for her comments.

JC confirmed that an action point list would be generated by Committee Services via email within three days of Committee meetings in future and agreed to pick up any actions from the Consumer Affairs Committee in conjunction with Daniel Francis (Vice Chair of Consumer Affairs).

JC

JC also confirmed that Committee Services aimed to produce minutes of meetings for the chair within a fortnight of the meeting. All draft minutes would have been checked for accuracy with the relevant lead officer before being passed to the chair. She said that this was now an internal performance target.

JC said that she took responsibility for the problems, as she had pushed for the meetings schedule to stay the same when the new committee arrangements had been introduced rather than inconvenience members with further changes. This had resulted in clashing deadlines and therefore a very challenging period for staff. She had underestimated the impact of this and the additional work that would be required of lead officers.

Casework monitoring software – SP confirmed that the three organisations who had submitted bids had made their presentations to a panel consisting of Sarah Pond, Daniel Francis, David Barry, the Director Public Liaison, JC and Michael Hill of ComplaintsGreat consultancy. Two out of the three had been short listed. She explained that the next stage would be site visits to see their systems in operation, and then to award the contract to the successful tender by the end of July.

SP confirmed that the timelines would be very tight for us to deliver our input to the project. There was some discussion over staff resources to support the implementation process and how it was critical that the Director, Public Liaison was not given conflicting priorities so that he could focus on the project.

Meeting with the Mayor - SG reported back on her recent meeting with Kulveer Ranger which she had followed up with a request for the Mayor to attend a Board meeting.

SG

Meeting dates 2010-11 – DL enquired about the amended meeting dates for 2010-11 and JC confirmed that these had been circulated by email recently. There was concern that as the London Assembly's Transport Committee meeting dates hadn't been released that they may potentially conflict with London TravelWatch meeting dates and JC advised that she would liaise with the Committee Administration Team to ensure this was taken into account, if possible.

JC

Research – GE asked what was happening with consultants Steer Davies Gleave and JC reported that in the absence of any comments from members she had requested clarification on two more areas to help inform our work and the work was finished. SG advised that she would be meeting with Sophia Lambert the following week to discuss research.

3. Matters arising

Business Continuity – DL queried the timescales for this year's internal audit of our business continuity arrangements and JC responded that she was hoping this would not take place until later in the year. Members confirmed that the Director, Public Liaison (who led on this) needed to be able to prioritise the new case management system work.

JC confirmed the current arrangements and that they were regularly reviewed by the SMT.

JC

Non-Executive Members – SG expressed her concern about mechanisms to prepare other Board members to join the Executive but it was felt that natural turnover would generate change and it was agreed that this be revisited at the next Board Awayday.

4. Chair's update

SG said that she had attended the recent Transport Committee meeting. She and the Director Research & Development had given evidence to their investigation into managing disruption on the underground. Our annual performance report had also been discussed.

SG advised members that Casework performance was also discussed and SP provided feedback from the last Consumer Affairs Committee. JC drew attention to this issue on the Business Plan delivery document, and stressed her desire for clearer accountability for performance. She wanted to pull the Director, Public Liaison back from hands on management so he could take a more strategic view of the issues and that with the Casework Manager returning in August, hopefully this would be achieved.

We had been advised by the GLA to expect a budget reduction of between 1 and 3%.

There was some discussion over the appraisals of Board members and it was suggested that this be completed by the end of the calendar year. SG agreed to action this and DL offered his assistance for the time he had covered the role of Chair. **SG**

SG updated the Executive Group on three new pieces of work:

- i. **0845 numbers** – the Communications officer was preparing a paper on this;
- ii. **Victoria – Bellingham line** – external research into usage on key sections of the South London Line had been commissioned;
- iii. **Managing Disruption on the Underground – Piccadilly Line** – the Rail & Policy Officer was writing a paper on this to go to the next Transport Committee

SG reported that she and JC had attended a meeting with Passenger Focus and they had also met for the first time with the non-Rail section of the DfT which had been very useful.

Black cab issue – SG said she was pleased to report that there had been remarkable progress on this matter and the Public Carriage Office have advised that they are appointing an officer to liaise with the Criminal Records Bureau. Negotiations should commence shortly and a paper would be released in due course but currently they did not want the details made public.

5. Finance report and accounts for June 2009

PE introduced his paper and highlighted key items on the management accounts:

- Capital expenditure – It was expected that the Casework software would cost in the region of £70k and provision had been made for this in the forecast. JC advised that she would be liaising with the GLA immediately regarding virement of funds;
- The adverse variance of staffing costs was due to extra temporary staff. SP questioned where extra resources for casework would come from and PT advised that provision had been made for this in the forecast; and
- Pension Scheme – PT confirmed that the variance in employer pension cost was due to a retrospective payment (Jan – March 09) dependent upon an

employee's choice of option within the pension scheme which was made in April.

DL observed that the quarterly HR report was overdue and it was agreed to circulate an email including absence figures rather than wait until the next meeting which would not be until September.

JC

6. Chief Executive's report

JC introduced her report and invited comments.

Passenger Focus

It was agreed that the joint event with the two Boards should go ahead and JC said that she would liaise with Jon Carter at Passenger Focus, who would organise this.

JC

Passenger Consultation Events

- **November 2009 event** – It was agreed that this event would take the form of a bus surgery in an outer London town centre and that detailed planning should commence.
- **February 2010 event** – The group considered the recommendation that this event should be a conference to look at aspects of paying for travel. They asked for further information to be provided before a decision was finalised.

JC

Company Credit Cards – PT confirmed the controls that were in place for corporate credit cards.

7. Withdrawal of Arriva Cross Country train services

The Director, Research & Development joined the meeting to update the Executive that since the last Executive meeting in April he had received a letter from Matthew Lodge, the Franchise Sponsor at the DfT. He was to be invited to a meeting where they would expand on the letter. There should be no need for a judicial review now that the DfT appeared to be cooperating with us. It was agreed that he would await further communication from the DfT before reporting to the Board.

TB

8. Business Plan Delivery 2009-10 – Quarterly review of progress against Work Plan

The work plan was discussed and some amendments agreed.

JC reported that, together with PT, she had commissioned commercial awareness training for managers which would be heavily based on this document.

DL mentioned the proposed research into first class travel and JC confirmed that we were in talks with ATOC about this and it was agreed that the project should be renamed to reflect the fact that it was concerned with capacity on commuter routes into London. She added that, although Passenger Focus would not contribute to the cost of this because

issues around first class travel were very different outside London, they had agreed to do so with the South London Line research.

JC confirmed that she would report progress towards delivering key business plan objectives on a quarterly basis and would try to give the Executive a flavour of what came out of the team plans in due course. SG requested that major exception reporting be covered in the Chief Executive's report in September's meeting. **JC**

9. Local authority liaison

LR updated the Executive on a recent meeting she had with JC, following up on their meeting with London Councils and confirmed that JC would be writing to them thanking them for the meeting and confirming their offer to involve us in other areas of their work.

JC

There was some discussion over interim arrangements and how members should now approach the matter of attending meetings. LR emphasised the need for consistency, stating that she did not want some local authorities to receive "preferential treatment". In the meantime, LR and JC recommended that a letter from the Chair be sent to all political transport leads at the end of August, outlining the role of London TravelWatch and highlighting any work we had done in their area.

JC

DL said that he believed we should reallocate boroughs to Board members. It was agreed that other Board members should be updated with what we were doing.

SG summarised by saying that we were not in support of members systematically attending local meetings. DL suggested that as in the case of the Red Route Forum, members could review the minutes of meetings to update themselves on local activity if they were linked to a borough.

10. Board issues

a. Key issues arising from meetings

GE mentioned a presentation given by the British Transport Police at the Access to Transport Committee during which it has been mentioned that very few women from black or minority ethnic backgrounds seemed to complain of being attacked on public transport whereas white women did. This issue was to be further investigated.

b. Outcome of Awayday – how are we doing things differently?

SG said that she wanted to revisit actions arising from the Awayday and suggested that at the next informal Board meeting we explain more about the role of the Executive Group, after which the issue of how we might do things differently could be addressed. It would also be useful to go through the work plan with the board members not on the Executive Group.

It was suggested that the October date might be ideal for this as the report on progress at the end of the second quarter would be available, and we could also look forward to next year's business plan.

c. Future Board meetings

SG reminded members that the next Board meeting on 29 September would take place in City Hall and she hoped the Mayor would attend. The agenda would include an update on how the recession was affecting transport in London.

11. Any other business

There was no other business discussed.

JC (9.9.09)