
Minutes

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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Executive Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 14 May 2009

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Present

Sharon Grant (SG)
Lorna Reith (LR)
Gail Engert (GE)
David Leibling (DL)

Chair
Deputy Chair

Janet Cooke (JC)
Patti Tobin (PT)
Peter Ellis (PE)

Chief Executive
Director, Finance & Personnel
Senior Finance Officer (minute 5)

Amy Waters (AW)

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

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Pond.

2. Draft minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2009

After discussion the minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

SG asked that minutes confirm if officers had been asked to withdraw from any part of a meeting.

SG was concerned about the time it is taking to publish minutes of meetings and there followed some discussion over the expectation time for documents. JC reminded members that there had been capacity issues in the Committee Services team in recent months exacerbated by having so many meetings close together.

LR and DL asked when the Board would be notified of the new Committee Services email account. JC agreed to liaise with the Senior Committee Administrator on this.

JC

Withdrawal of Arriva Cross Country train services in West and South London -

JC advised she had requested initial legal advice and would update members as soon as this was available.

JC

3. Matters arising from previous meetings

3.1 Risk register

DL asked whether the financial procedures had yet been updated to reflect the reserves policy. PT replied that with the Accounts Officer being out of the office things were taking a bit longer to produce than expected but assured DL that it was imminent.

3.2 Local authority relations

JC confirmed that, together with LR, she would be meeting with London Councils on 16 June, and that they would meet beforehand to discuss LR's previous paper on relations with local authorities. LR requested something in writing to prompt discussion in advance of meeting.

JC

3.2 Transport Committee reviews

JC confirmed that the officer meeting to discuss the MoU has been rescheduled to the 21 May, SG said that a further meeting to discuss the overlap issue between London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus would also be held.

3.3 TfL research

Following discussion about TfL's "Travel in London" report, which had just been published, SG confirmed that TfL would be making a presentation on their Customer Touchpoints research at the informal Board meeting on 9 June. Steer Davies Gleave would also present the research they had done for London TravelWatch at that meeting.

3.4 Website upgrade

JC confirmed that the work would start in June and members discussed the briefing paper prepared by the Communications Officer and Director, Public Liaison, which had been circulated after the last meeting.

DL expressed his dislike of the constant double clicking required on the website. JC advised that this issue was being addressed as part of the upgrade. He also suggested that new Board members be asked to review the website and provide feedback. LR expressed her frustration at having to register every time she wanted to

read the newsletter. JC advised that this had apparently been a deliberate decision to direct visitors to our website, however, this would now be reviewed.

3.5 Press releases

SG mentioned recent press releases and the reaction to the Oyster issue from TfL and DfT.

4. Chair's update

4.1 Board papers

SG said she was pleased with how the new committees were developing and also the more concise Board minutes.

4.2 Victoria Bellingham/Phase II issue

SG said that she and JC met with Ian Brown of TfL and that he had seemed rather surprised by London TravelWatch's reaction to this issue. SG had maintained that the failure to announce associated service cuts alongside the East London Line Phase 2 announcement was a serious breach of faith. It was felt that there were a variety of measures that could be put in place to change service patterns, so that far fewer people would be disadvantaged by the withdrawal of this service in the future, than it seemed at present.

It had therefore been agreed with TfL that London TravelWatch would be involved in drawing up a consultation paper on options to do this. This would take some six months, after which the paper would go out for public consultation.

4.3 Passenger Focus

SG said that she had arranged to meet Colin Foxall.

4.4 Lord Adonis meeting

SG advised that this meeting had been rescheduled to June.

4.5 Taxis Meeting

SG advised that, together with the Streets & Surface Transport Policy Officer, she would be meeting with Jeroen Weimar, TfL, to follow up the recent meeting held with the Public Carriage Office.

5. Finance report – April 2009

5.1 Draft Annual accounts for 2008/09

JC advised that although the auditors had already been in, and there had been no queries so far, the accounts were still in draft format.

PE advised that the £66k earmarked reserves were to fund projects carried forward from the 2008/09 programme and the bulk of this would be committed in quarter one of 2009/10.

Members discussed the accounts and made various suggestions on presentation. In answer to specific queries the following points were confirmed:

5.2 Expenditure/Chair, Members & Staff Costs

DL's costs last summer had been shown under Chair's costs, not Members. SG's recruitment costs had not been charged to London TravelWatch because the appointment had been made by the Transport Committee.

5.3 Accommodation costs

PT advised that the reason that cleaning costs had doubled was due to the implementation of the London Living Wage entitlement, and also because we had commissioned various deep cleans of the office.

5.4 Supplies & Services

The Executive discussed the cost of providing the Annual Review but agreed it was important that we have a document that could be distributed for publicity purposes throughout the year.

Executive members agreed to the circulation of the accounts to the rest of the Board.

5.5 Management accounts for April 2009

Rent Review - PT requested guidance from the Executive members as to whether professional advice should be sought in respect of the value of the break clause option in the lease. After discussion it was agreed that professional advice should be obtained on this matter but that nothing would be actioned without referring to the Executive.

JC/PT

5.6 Revenue Expenditure – Part 1

Chairman, Members & Staff Costs

JC advised that although she is keeping a very close eye on staff costs, we may be looking at an overspend due to the cover for the Casework Manager and also retaining AW to assist with the PA's return to work induction period.

JC confirmed that she had heard nothing more concerning the ex-Chairman's matter, and PE advised that £1,500 had been built into the Creditors category in preparation.

6. Chief Executive's report

6.1 Staffing

There was some discussion over the replacement of the Rail & Underground Policy Officer. The Executive agreed that the post should be advertised as full time but were concerned that remit of the new post should be widened and that it should be titled Senior Policy officer to reflect this.

6.2 Business Plan Delivery 2009/10

JC started by explaining the purpose of the work plan and confirmed that progress in delivering would be reported to the Executive at the end of every quarter. When complete it would be cascaded down through the organisation and used to support performance management. It would also be used as the basis for project plans which would be developed for key pieces of work and, as budgets would be attached to these, it would help to ensure more accurate financial forecasting. JC then went through the paper in more detail. It was suggested that a higher level version might be required for the Executive Group and Board.

6.3 Casework Review

SG stated her concern that new software hadn't been procured yet. JC confirmed that, in accordance with what had been proposed in the Casework Review paper, she was in the process of appointing someone to write a specification setting out our system requirements that would be used to invite bids from various software suppliers. She was meeting with a recommended specialist consultant the following day and hoped that we would have a named supplier by early July.

The format of the work plan was carefully considered by the Executive Group who made various suggestions.

6.4 Target 9 / Faith communities

LR suggested this be expanded to include the Ambassador Scheme.

6.5 Target 11 / Research

There was some discussion over the relevance of the first class travel project but it was decided that it was still relevant due to overcrowding issues and the wording should reflect this.

SG felt that we should be pressing TfL to do the research into usage of the Victoria - Bellingham line rather than do it ourselves.

DL suggested that the "business as usual" objectives be built in as well as so that their other commitments could be taken into account when considering new work. JC replied that she was focussing on reporting the Business Plan objectives at this stage, but that other items would be added later. JC also reminded the Executive that this would now be developed with input from the Wider Management Team but there were still training issues to be addressed in this respect.

The Executive were asked to give JC any other feedback.

7. Board issues

7.1 Matters arising from Awayday 25.2.09

JC tabled the Facilitators' findings from the Awayday and offered to circulate to the Board if required. The Executive requested time to absorb the information before commenting, DL said that actions from the event should be followed up. SG confirmed that they would but this would not necessarily be straight away.

7.2 Board meeting 19.5.09

It was agreed that only Board members should receive the accounts whilst in draft format.

JC confirmed that Michelle Dix will be presenting to the Board in the private session on work to develop the next Mayor's Transport Strategy.

LR asked that the covering email which goes out with the Board papers be clearer in explaining about the confidential afternoon session, so that Board members knew to allocate a whole day in their diaries.

Senior Committee Administrator

8. Pay review

Officers withdrew while the Executive Group considered a remuneration issue as required by contract.

The meeting rose at 4.40pm.