Fares and Ticketing Committee 18.2.10

London TravelWatch

Secretariat Memorandum

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The impacts of the policy by Transport for London to encourage the use of smartcard tickets

1   Purpose of report

1.1   To provide the basis for a discussion on the future of non-smartcard based tickets on Transport for London (TfL) services.

2   Recommendations

2.1   Members are invited to note this report.

3   Background

3.1   Since the introduction of Oyster there has been a substantial change in the way in which tickets are produced for use on the network. In particular there has been an emphasis on the movement of sales away from vehicle and station paper ticketing and towards the smartcard technology of Oyster.

3.2   Most of these changes have been explored at length by this committee over the period that they had been introduced.

3.3   There are several reasons for this change :

- To reduce boarding and alighting times for buses;
- To reduce queuing times at station booking offices and ticket machines;
- To reduce the incidence of fraud;
- To reduce the incidence of fare evasion by passengers;
- To reduce the incidence of theft by staff;
- To increase convenience for passengers;
- And to give passengers a product deal which ensures them value for money.

3.4   Recent changes have included the withdrawal of the paper one day bus pass in favour of a capping limit on Oyster and the reduction in the number of roadside ticket machines issuing paper bus tickets.

3.5   In this process of change there have been a number of concerns where there has not been a technical alternative means of providing a service. These have included :

- The availability and distribution of Oyster agents across the network, as in some areas there is a paucity of provision;
- The impact on casual travellers not in possession of an Oyster card;
- And the 'customer unfriendliness' of cashless zones and buses for passengers without an Oystercard (such as tourists or visitors) or where a problem occurs with their Oystercard if they have one e.g. lack of credit.

3.6   It should also be noted that in the Greater London area there are still instances of rail stations without any form of Ticket Vending Machine, or where the Ticket Vending Machine has no means of topping up or adding tickets to an Oystercard. In the case of Croydon Tramlink none of their ticket vending machines at tram stops has the capability of topping up or adding tickets to an Oystercard.

4.   Discussion

4.1   It should be noted that almost all of the objectives set for the change in ticketing policy (set out in paragraph 3.3) have now been met. On the bus network in particular the use of paper tickets is now a very small percentage of the overall number of transactions.

4.2   As an example, TfL recently removed 77 roadside ticket vending machines where usage had dropped to very low levels.

4.3   Current London TravelWatch policy has supported and encouraged the development of Oyster and the switch away from paper based ticketing, but expressed concern about the distribution and number of Oyster agents particularly in areas not served by London Underground. The numbers of such agents has increased over the years, and the introduction of Oyster retailing by a number of train operators has addressed some of these concerns. However, there remain a number of areas where such operators have not done so and where there may be no other agent available in the vicinity.

4.4   Other than on articulated bus routes (because of the layout of the vehicles) there would seem to be no practical reasons for continuing the operation of the pay before you board in central London or on route W7 (this was experimentally changed to this mode of operation in 2001). This would allow the small number of passengers who need to pay by cash to do so. This would also permit, eventually, the removal of current car park type roadside ticket vending machines.

5   Future policy

5.1   The development of Oyster has been followed by the development of ticket vending machines to retail the products available on Oyster on the rail, underground and DLR networks. However, it might be possible to develop a simpler roadside version of such machines, which could be incorporated for example into the structure of shelters or bus stop poles. This would also be potentially useful at tram stops or at rail stations with very

low footfall where a conventional ticket vending machine might not be justified. This could be a development of the current 'Oyster readers' used on stations.

6   Equalities and inclusion implications

6.1   Lack of access to Oyster products may mean that people on lower incomes would potentially have to pay more for their journeys.

7   Financial implications

7.1   The contents of this report have no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch.

8   Legal powers

8.1   Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and where it appears to it to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to – any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.