
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 10 July 2012 at 6 Middle Street, London EC1

Contents

- 1 Chair's introduction, pre-meeting announcements
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes
- 5 Matters arising (CAC035)
- 6 Actions taken (CAC036)
- 7 Complexity in fares and ticketing
- 8 Casework report and update (CAC037)
- 9 Any other business
- 10 Resolution to move into confidential session

Present

Members

David Barry (Chair), Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant, Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (Deputy Chair)

Guests

Joe Kerrigan	Passenger Benefits, Department for Transport
Lucy Preston	Ticketing Policy Manager, Transport for London
Serena Allen	Ticketing Services Manager, TfL
Peter Twigg	Head of London & South East Support, Association of Train Operating Companies
Nicholas Wortley	Competition and Consumer Policy Manager, Office of Rail Regulation (Item 7)

Helen Deakin Strategic Communications Officer, Transport for London

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Susan Parham-McCance	Casework Manager (Item 8)

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

2 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Consumer Affairs committee held on 8 May 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment that Joe Kerrigan from the Department for Transport be noted as attending.

5 Matters arising (CAC035)

5.1 Production of posters giving information on black cab fares

It was noted posters should be introduced in areas such as airports and rail terminuses and that officers hoped to meet managers at Gatwick shortly and would raise this issue then.

5.2 How to Complain text added to website

The Communications Officer reported that the text from the How to Complain leaflet had now been added to the website.

5.3 Ticketless technologies presentation

Joe Kerrigan agreed to ask Jenni Borg for her presentation on ticketless technologies and to send it to London TravelWatch.

6 Actions taken (CAC036)

The Director, Policy & Investigation, presented his report on actions taken by officers since the previous meeting. He said that he had now submitted London TravelWatch's response to the Department for Transport's fares review following previous discussions at the committee.

7 Complexity in fares and ticketing

Nick Wortley, Competition and Consumer Policy Manager at the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), gave a presentation on recent research into difficulties experienced by passengers when purchasing tickets. The presentation covered the following issues:

- The ORR had carried out research into passenger understanding of ticketing structures and validity
- The research found passengers were uncertain about when 'off-peak' tickets were valid and therefore sometimes they bought more expensive tickets than they needed
- Passengers did not understand the conditions relating to Advance tickets, in particular that they were only valid for the specified train
- Passengers were not confident that they were purchasing the right ticket when using ticket vending machines at stations
- ATOC and train operating companies were working on ways to improve information given to passengers about ticketing, including redesigning tickets, giving more information on websites and making clear the meaning of phrases such as 'London terminals'
- Longer term, the train industry hoped that replacing the current fares database would help give better information for customers
- The ORR did not rule out the possibility of using consumer law to assist passengers if the industry did not make progress

Following a useful discussion, the Chair thanked Mr Wortley for attending and for briefing members on this useful research.

8 Casework report and update (CAC037)

The Casework Manager presented the report of the Casework team for the period April to June 2012. She said that she had reviewed the way Target 1 was reported and would now record all those cases requiring a written response of some kind.

It was noted that both National Rail and TfL improved their performance in responding to enquiries. However, closer examination of the data showed that the response time for those cases taking more than 40 days was increasing.

Members noted that London Buses and Oyster had greater response times than many train operators, even though some of the train operators were handling large numbers of cases. The Casework Manager said that the train companies generally responded more quickly as the cases were often more straightforward, whereas a complaint to, for example, Oyster, could be quite complicated and take some time to resolve.

The Casework Manager apologised for omitting the data from the 'Direct' column from the second table in Part 2. The table showed that London Buses was still giving rise to the greatest volume of casework by operator.

It was noted that London TravelWatch's performance had been retained at a very high level for some time and the Casework team were to be congratulated. The main focus of the Casework Report was now the performance of TfL and other transport operators and it would be sensible to amend the order of the report so that details of operator performance came before those for London TravelWatch.

The Casework Manager circulated a note showing the types of complaints being generated by various transport operators. Members were keen to see trends and noted that many of the complaints about train operators related to penalty fare notices and that complaints about Oyster often related to problems with refunds and overcharges.

9 Any other business

There was no other business.

10 Resolution to move into confidential session

The meeting resolved, under section 15(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the next following item/s, that it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded from the meeting.

In confidential session, members considered the review of the meeting.