
Minutes

Agenda item: 4
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**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 15 June 2011 at
6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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Present

Members

David Barry (Chair), Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant, Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (Deputy Chair)
(Items 1-5)

Guests

Simon Feast Fares & Passenger Benefits Manager, Department for Transport (DfT)

Stakeholder Representatives

Matt Winfield Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London (TfL) (from Item 6)

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Research & Development
John Cartledge	Safety & Policy Adviser (from Item 5)
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Bryan Davey	Director, Public Liaison
Sharon Malley	Senior Committee Administrator (minutes)
Susan Parham-McCance	Casework Manager (Item 10)

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting. He made the standard housekeeping and 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 9 March 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 Matters arising (CAC005)

5.1 Amendments to feedback questionnaire

It was agreed that the Director, Public Liaison, would endeavour to bring to the next meeting details of potential changes to the feedback questionnaire to enable more direct comparison with the questionnaire issued by Passenger Focus.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.2 Recording of complaints about the Cycle Hire scheme

It was agreed to examine whether the quarterly casework report could be amended to disaggregate the complaints referred to TfL to show the various modes being complained about and the Cycle Hire scheme would be included within that.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.3 Posters giving information about taxi fares

Matt Winfield of TfL reported via email that while TfL has, in the past, printed posters showing potential fares at some popular taxi ranks, it was in reality difficult to predict the

fares because they were metered and depended on a number of factors including the route taken and levels of congestion.

Members agreed that more detailed information about the potential level of fares should be available for passengers at locations such as airports and stations and called on TfL to ensure this was provided.

Action: Committee services

5.4 Joining Stratford and Stratford International stations

Simon Feast, Fares & Passenger Benefits Manager at the DfT, reported that the department had facilitated several meetings to encourage the joining of Stratford and Stratford International stations once the DLR link opened, but ultimately it was a commercial decision for the operators and TfL. The high-speed services stopping at Stratford were not part of the Travelcard agreement and the DfT would not amend the franchise agreement to enforce a change.

It was noted that it was unsatisfactory for passengers to be charged to use the DLR link between the two stations when they might reasonably expect that the purchase of a ticket to one Stratford station would include through travel as far as the other. If the stations were not going to be joined for ticketing purposes it would be clearer for passengers if they had completely distinct names.

It was agreed that the Chair of London TravelWatch would write to TfL and Southeastern on this subject and Simon Feast would raise it again within the DfT. In addition, the Chair would write to John Biggs AM, in whose constituency the stations were located, to seek his support for their joining.

Action: Director, Research & Development; Chair

5.5 Distribution of How to Complain leaflets

It was agreed that the Communications Officer would report to members on which libraries had received the How to Complain leaflets and how many leaflets has been distributed overall.

Action: Communications Officer

5.6 Survey of whether station staff are available at gatelines

It was noted that the report in the paperwork should be read as an officer recommendation to members.

Members discussed the proposal to institute an informal survey, conducted by staff and members, to monitor whether London Underground station staff were available at station gatelines. It was agreed that it would be preferable to investigate the possibility of conducting a more valid, formal survey and the Director, Research & Development, would present options to the next meeting.

Action: Director, Research & Development

5.7 Inclusion of exceptions within Casework Report

It was noted that, given that the Casework Report was written some months in arrears of the conclusion of cases, it was not always straightforward to identify the reasons for certain cases falling out of the targets. However, the value for members of having such information was acknowledged and the Director, Public Liaison would bring the issue back to a future meeting for further consideration.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.8 Inclusion of London TravelWatch's details on Department for Transport website

Simon Feast agreed to raise this matter if London TravelWatch could provide him with previous email correspondence.

Action: Communications Officer

5.9 Posters on buses

Members welcomed the amendment to the posters on London buses that removed London TravelWatch's phone number. However, they noted that the new posters did not include reference to lost property, which generated a significant proportion of calls to London TravelWatch.

The Director, Public Liaison, reported that there were some practical difficulties with putting bus garage numbers on posters and that it was more sensible for lost property queries to be dealt with through the 0845 call centre number. However, it would be helpful if the poster could indicate that passengers should call the 0845 number for lost property and this should be suggested to TfL when they next revised the posters.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

5.10 Clarification of London TravelWatch's role in London Metro advertisement

The Chief Executive said she would raise this matter with TfL at their next communications meeting.

Action: Chief Executive

6 Actions taken (CAC006)

It was noted that the meeting with David Strain at the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland had arisen because the DRDNI had sought London TravelWatch's advice on consumer regulation.

7 Passenger charters and compensation (CAC007)

The Director, Public Liaison, presented a report on the current position relating to rail passenger charters and cash compensation schemes. He stated that the report showed how the position was moving slowly towards a more consistent framework but recognised there were still significant differences between TfL modes and National Rail.

The report noted that few passengers took up their compensation rights when delayed and it was difficult to provide consistent information to passengers because of the fragmented nature of the overall position.

The Safety & Policy Adviser stated that some compensation schemes could be complicated to understand and that London TravelWatch favoured "delay repay", under which passengers were entitled to compensation if their journey was delayed for a given length of time, regardless of the reason for the delay. Simon Feast stated that there was no current intention within the DfT to move away from delay repay and that recent franchises have included additional provisions for season ticket holders who experienced lengthy periods of disruption.

It was agreed that the appendix to the report setting out the current compensation arrangements by company should be highlighted on the London TravelWatch website and that the Communications Officer should consider a summer campaign to inform passengers about what they are entitled to.

Action: Communications Officer

Members thanked the Director, Public Liaison, for a useful report and agreed that it was unfortunate that so little compensation made its way back to passengers.

8 London TravelWatch recommendations on compensation arrangements

This item was considered both as part of Item 7 above and in the confidential session of the meeting.

9 Ticket vending machine payment methods (CAC009)

The Director, Research & Development, presented a report on changes to payment methods accepted by ticket vending machines (TVMs) at stations. He noted that, as a result of individual decisions by local managers, a position had developed whereby TVMs in a substantial number of London Midland and First Great Western stations no longer accepted cash payments.

It was noted that London TravelWatch had concerns about accessibility to the railway if passengers could only purchase tickets with a chip-and-pin card. In addition, if passengers had cash to pay for tickets but the only available means of purchasing them was with a card, it would make the enforcement of penalty fares against them very difficult.

It was noted that this could potentially become a national issue and that it may be appropriate for Passenger Focus to take the lead on it. It was agreed that the Director, Research & Development, would report back to members with any developments on this.

10 **Casework report and update (CAC010)**

The Director, Public Liaison, presented the Casework report for the period January to March 2011.

It was noted that the table showing the number of cases per operator had been reorganised by rail and non-rail but that if possible the 64 complaints relating to TfL should be disaggregated by mode, as discussed under Matters arising.

Members discussed the table that showed how long operators took to respond to London TravelWatch complaints. It was noted that of the seven operators that took longest to respond, only one was a franchised train operating company (TOC). This could perhaps be attributed to the requirements in place in franchise agreements for TOCs to respond quickly to complaints and members agreed that it would be regrettable if future franchises did not include such requirements. It was agreed that, in any review of franchise requirements, London TravelWatch should make clear it supports retaining targets for dealing with correspondence as an effective means of ensuring complaints were dealt with promptly and effectively.

Action: Director, Research & Development

It was noted that the table on page 12 should include the previous period's information for comparison purposes.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

11 **Stakeholder questionnaire report (CAC011)**

Members discussed the comments and noted that, in contrast to the overall results, many of them were quite negative. The Director, Public Liaison, said that often people were happy with the overall service from London TravelWatch but would comment that they were disappointed not to obtain a refund.

Members agreed that the overall findings of the Stakeholder report were excellent and thanked the Casework Manager and her team for delivering such good results.

12 **Tickets purchased online**

The Director, Public Liaison, reported that the Office of Rail Regulation had begun setting out consumer issues for consideration including the complexity of ticket retailing and whether use of channels such as the internet for purchasing tickets affected passengers'

ability to find the best deal. The Director, Public Liaison, had asked the ORR to include the problem of issuing tickets at stations that had been purchased online but this had been declined.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would contribute to the ORR research but if it did not address members' specific concerns London TravelWatch would raise them with Passenger Focus.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

13 Any other business

There was no other business.

14 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 research into passenger compensation schemes and research into incomplete journeys on Oyster and reviewed the meeting.