
Minutes

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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Governance Committee held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 12 July 2011, 13.30 - 14.15 hrs

Present:

David Leibling (DL)	Chair
David Barry (DB)	
Terry Bennett (TB)	
Gail Engert (GE)	
Sophia Lambert (SL)	
Patti Tobin (PT)	Director, Finance & Personnel
Peter Ellis (PE)	Senior Finance Officer (item 4)
Gytha Chinweze (GC)	Executive Assistant
Bryan Davey (BD)	Director, Public Liaison (item 5)
Tim Bellenger (TB)	Director, Research (item 5)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Janet Cooke (JC), Chief Executive and the Chair Sharon Grant (SG). David Leibling (DL) Deputy Chair, took the chair for this meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2011 were approved as a correct record of the meeting, subject to one minor amendment under item 3 – to delete 'DL and' in the first sentence.

3. Matters arising

PT advised that authorisation to change London TravelWatch's 2011/12 GLA funding profile to assist cash flow in respect of voluntary redundancy compensation payments from September 2011 was to be discussed at the Transport Committee meeting on 14 July 2011.

PT reported that a decision from Passenger Focus regarding possible outsourcing arrangements was still awaited. Due to pressing financial implications, members stated that time was of the essence, DL to follow up with Passenger Focus and if this option was not feasible then JC should immediately follow through

with alternative arrangements for outsourcing.

Action: DL/JC

Members requested that JC considers their comments on the Business Plan and follows up on this as a matter of priority on her return due to impending deadlines for submission to the London Assembly. Members agreed that despite the tight schedule, it was very important that staff should have the opportunity to contribute to the Business Plan.

Action: JC

It was requested that at the next staff meeting, staff should be asked whether they would be willing for members to have their contact details for use in case of emergency or business continuity purposes and that a list then be compiled accordingly for member circulation. It was also suggested that staff 'travel to work' plans be incorporated.

Action: PT

Members agreed to defer Board member issues to a later date.

Action: SG

4. Finance report

PE noted that there was deterioration in expected outturn in June as the expected date for some staff leaving under voluntary redundancy terms in the autumn had been delayed one month to October 2011 as the compensation payments are dependent on the London Assembly's awaited agreement to change the London TravelWatch funding profile within 2011/12.

PE reported that the closing year end surplus would be about £13,000, though this could change as the year progresses.

PE cautioned that the closing general reserve had now reduced to £60,000 so that there is little room for attrition or the unexpected.

PE referred to the cash flow forecasts for 2011/12 and 2012/13 and also to the £13,000 cash balance carried forward.

PT reported that the auditors had yet to sign off the recent audit and agreed to follow up on this. PT added that the outcome of the 2010/11 audit and accounts was required so that the relevant information could be included in the Annual Report which is due for publication late July 2011.

Action: PT

PT offered to send the August finance report to Board members via email, to those members who will not be on leave, as there would be no meeting of the Governance Committee in August. Members agreed to this.

Action: PT

PT reported that the Finance Team was currently working on the 2012/13 budget bid.

5. Any other business of which advance notice has been given

Memorandum of Understanding

Members had requested that TB and BD join the meeting to discuss the London Assembly's proposal to suspend the Memorandum of Understanding as outlined in the report to be discussed at the Transport Committee Meeting on 14 July 2011. Members felt that this was wholly unacceptable. SG had written to Caroline Pidgeon to express her concerns about this. DL noted that Caroline Pidgeon appeared to be unaware of the implications of such an action.

Members stated that there were clauses in the Memorandum of Understanding about amending the Memorandum and how to deal with disputes under section 8.1 and 9.1 and asked BD to contact the office of the Ombudsman and seek advice on this. **Action: BD**

Members also requested that all members of the Assembly be contacted to draw their attention to the relevant clauses in the Memorandum of Understanding. BD agreed to send an email on behalf of the Chair to members of the Assembly. **Action: BD**

Members asked for the email to the Assembly Members to focus on matters of principle and in addition to addressing the Memorandum of Understanding issue, to note the following:-

- That members wished to note that the Accounting Officer needs to be assured with regard to alternative accommodation, that the solution offers the best value for money.
- The Board welcomes the proposal for the Assembly and London TravelWatch to collaborate in large consultation exercises.

Members noted with concern that an amendment to the Localism Bill had been tabled in the House of Lords which, if agreed, would abolish London TravelWatch and fold its functions into the GLA. It was agreed that peers should be contacted to make the case for retaining an independent, multi-modal transport user watchdog in London. A letter should also be sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. **Action: BD/DL**

Members agreed that, under the circumstances, it would be inappropriate for officers to attend the Transport Committee meeting on 14 July 2011. PT will contact the London Assembly to request that any questions be put in writing so that an appropriate response can be given. **Action: PT**