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## Minutes

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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Governance committee held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 22 February 2011, 10.00 – 12.40 hrs

Present:

Sharon Grant (SG)	Chair
David Barry (DB)	
Terry Bennett (TB)	
Gail Engert (GE)	
Sophia Lambert (SL)	
David Leibling (DL)	

Janet Cooke (JC)	Chief Executive
Bryan Davey (BD)	Director, Public Liaison (part minute 7)
Peter Ellis (PE)	Senior Finance Officer (minute 5)
Sharon Malley (SM)	Senior Committee Administrator

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from the Director, Personnel and Finance who was attending a meeting with London TravelWatch's pension providers.

### 2. Minutes of additional meeting held on 16 December 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

### 3. Minutes of the final meeting of the Executive Group held on 20 January 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2011 were agreed subject to an amendment in section 6: the Surface Design Forum should read Surface Transport Design Forum, and it should be referred to as a forum and not as a committee.

#### 4. Matters arising

Website: Members discussed London TravelWatch's website and noted that a substantial amount of "under the bonnet" work had taken place to ensure the site continued to work well on a technical level and to aid user navigation.

Members suggested that some consumer-facing elements of the website would benefit from review, with the objective of improving its appearance and usability.

JC pointed out that the website was on the agenda of the next Consumer Affairs committee (9 March). It was agreed that any comments on the website should be sent to DB in advance of that meeting and copied to all members.

**Members**

Advertisement for new Board member: It was noted that the London Assembly did not yet appear to have published the advertisement for a new Board member.

Members' paperwork and print costs: Members discussed the proposal to provide members with higher specification printers to enable them to print their own papers at home rather than receive them through the post. It was noted that members generally preferred papers to be issued in printed form. DB agreed to research which method was more cost-effective and report back.

**DB**

Members' hours and remuneration: It was agreed that the Deputy Chair of the Board would be expected to work for a total of four days per month on London TravelWatch business, in line with the commitment expected from the two committee chairs. Other members would be expected to work three days per month. This would be effective from 1 February and remuneration would be amended to reflect this.

**PT**

#### 5. Finance report

PE presented the January finance report and highlighted that the projected annual revenue surplus would be £47,000 because of not recruiting to vacant posts, bringing the overall projected reserves to £174,000. The cash flow position had improved because of the slower rate of spending.

It was noted that the reserves figure was not solely cash but included some fixed assets and allowances for depreciation. It was also noted that London TravelWatch had no overdraft facilities and no contingencies built into the budget so the reserves were its only financial cushion.

It was agreed that, to improve transparency of reporting, the composition of the reserves, in particular indicating how much was held in cash, should be noted on the monthly management accounts. It was also agreed that in the next financial year members' salary costs would be shown separately from staff salary costs.

**PE**

## 6. Chair's report

SG noted that the implementation of the internal review had been delayed by changes to the pension fund rules.

SG noted that various references had recently been made to London TravelWatch in the media and confirmed the importance of maintaining good relations with transport journalists. It was agreed it would be useful for her to meet some of the key correspondents in person. **SG**

DB noted that London TravelWatch's Wikipedia page needed updating and agreed to upload revised content if JC would provide wording. **DB/JC**

## 7. Chief Executive's report

JC updated members on various staffing matters. The vacancies left by the departure of the Senior Policy Officer and the Committee Administrator had not been filled and as a result the Research & Development team had been more than usually stretched. It was noted that it would be beneficial to the organisation to increase its expertise in the area of London Underground and JC would consider ways of taking this forward. **JC**

JC reported that London TravelWatch had recently been notified that the Local Government Ombudsman had found in our favour in respect of an appeal. BD explained that the appeal had concerned an individual who wanted Transport for London to provide details of the outcome of a bus driver's disciplinary procedure. TfL had provided details of the bus company's standard disciplinary procedure and the options available to it but had not given the details of the outcome, on the grounds that this information was data protected. The individual had appealed against London TravelWatch's 'acceptance' of TfL's decision to withhold this information but the Local Government Ombudsman had upheld London TravelWatch's position. It was noted that London TravelWatch had now persuaded TfL to confirm the date and location on which any disciplinary meetings had been held to help reassure complainants that action had been taken.

JC reported that two recommendations in respect of business continuity had been made following an audit last year and that they were scheduled to have been implemented by now. However, this was delayed by the internal reorganisation process. The GLA's internal auditors had agreed that the implementation should be deferred until the final structure of the organisation was known and a new target of October 2011 had been agreed.

Members noted that business continuity issues should be considered during the reorganisation process.

## 8. Quarterly human resources report

JC presented the quarterly human resources report. Members noted that staff attendance had shown substantial improvement on the same quarter last year.

## 9. Interim report on the internal review

JC updated members on progress with the implementation of the internal review. It was noted that the recruitment freeze had resulted in some flexibility in the budget, which should be targeted at areas of potential weakness within the organisation.

Members discussed feedback to date from the staff consultation on the reorganisation. Members welcomed the comments and acknowledged that some concerns had merit. They noted concern that the proposed structure would lead to a reduction in focus on communications activity and agreed that line management of the corporate administrative posts should be moved elsewhere. Further consideration would be given once the consultation period had concluded.

It was agreed that Option 2c would be retained as the preferred structure and that JC would develop options to allocate any additional budgetary resources to the policy and communications functions. Any extra capacity needed to be “detachable” to take account of potential additional budgetary constraints in the future. **JC**

It was agreed that members did not want to delay the implementation of the new structure beyond the three months set out in the employment policy, with only exceptional circumstances being able to give rise to additional delay.

It was also noted that the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Chief Executive were developing options concerning London TravelWatch’s relationship with Passenger Focus.

## 10. Workplan 2010-11, position at end of quarter three

JC apologised that this item was not yet available. The workplan had recently been updated by staff and was now somewhat unwieldy, comprehensive editing was required before it could be distributed.

Members acknowledged the time constraints involved but requested that an exceptions report be circulated as soon as possible so that it could be considered at a short meeting of the Governance Committee at the end of the next Consumer Affairs committee on 9 March. **Executive Assistant**

## 11. Board matters

JC reported that the bus surgery in Stratford was scheduled for week beginning 21 March 2011 but that it had been difficult to finalise a date in Kingston.

## 12. Any other business

There was no other business.