
Minutes

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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Governance Committee held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 24 January 2012, 14.00 hrs - 16:00 hrs

Present:

David Barry (DB)	
Terry Bennett (TB)	
Gail Engert (GE)	
Sharon Grant (SG)	Chair
Sophia Lambert (SL)	
David Leibling (DL)	Deputy Chair
Tim Bellenger (TB)	Director, Policy & Investigation (item 1-8)
John Burgess (JB)	HR Officer
John Cartledge (JCa)	Safety & Policy Adviser
Gytha Chinweze (GC)	Executive Assistant
Janet Cooke (JC)	Chief Executive
Peter Ellis (PE)	Senior Finance Officer (items 4-5)

1 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Minutes of the meetings held on 20 September 2011 and 6 December 2011

The minutes of the 6 December 2011 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Action: SG

3 Matters arising not considered elsewhere on the agenda

JC confirmed that training for budget holders on the new procedures would take place at the end of January. Training for managers on the HR procedures would take place at the beginning of February.

JC confirmed that the matter of a mid-year audit would be raised with the auditors at the pre-audit meeting which would hopefully take place in late February.

Action: JC

JC will confirm the date of the next Passenger engagement event with Richard Freeston-Clough, the Communications Officer. She added that she had asked him to draft a short paper on electronic and social media for the next Governance Committee meeting.

Action: JC

4 Finance report

PE presented the Finance report for December 2011. He reported an expected forecast revenue deficit of £165,000 for the 2011/12 financial year, leaving a closing general reserve of £26,000 at 31 March 2012.

Members noted the actual cashflow statement to 31 December 2011 and the cash flow forecast for 2012/13.

Members had agreed at the last meeting that additional reporting of the monthly bank reconciliations would be made to the Governance Committee for the next couple of months, for internal control reasons, and that the necessity for this would be reviewed once the new financial system was bedded in. PE circulated the bank reconciliation to members as requested and this was noted.

5 HR Report

JC introduced John Burgess, recently appointed part-time HR officer, to the meeting and he was welcomed by members.

JB presented the HR report for the period October-December 2011 covering the following areas: - staff/posts: leavers, starters and secondment; recruitment; training and development and the staff attendance analysis.

Members congratulated Poonam Hayer, Policy Officer, who had recently left the organisation on her new job. They noted that she had moved to a more senior post after three years at London TravelWatch but asked JB to do some work on talent management to further develop staff within the organisation.

Action: JB

Members were pleased to note that from April London TravelWatch would be hosting two graduate trainees on secondment from Network Rail under the new Network Rail-funded initiative 'Track and Train' cross-industry, paid internship scheme

Members commented on the positive improvements in the staff attendance compared to previous years and congratulated officers on this.

JC was asked to await the outcome of the meeting with the Assembly on 31 January 2012 before appointing to vacant posts.

Action: JC

6 Working with Passenger Focus – update on discussions

JC presented a report on working with Passenger Focus which provided an update to members of the two meetings that had taken place since the last Governance Committee of the tripartite group (London TravelWatch, London Assembly and Passenger Focus) and also of one meeting between London Assembly and Passenger Focus.

She updated members on the general discussions that had taken place and the cost and HR implications of possible future working with Passenger Focus under the “Paxco” arrangement. It was suggested that this would be a joint venture or limited liability partnership to which all the staff of both London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus would be seconded, but where the Boards of both organisations would remain independent and jointly control Paxco.

SG reported that, at the meeting with the Assembly on 13 January 2012, London TravelWatch had raised its current concerns and questions about the Paxco proposal and pointed out what needed to be put in place to mitigate these concerns.

Members discussed in detail the cost, HR and continuity implications of the proposed Paxco arrangement and expressed their concern. They also considered the likely financial implications for London TravelWatch if it did not proceed with the Paxco model.

On reflecting on the statutory responsibilities of London TravelWatch, members were united in the view that the proposed Paxco model would not provide a vehicle for delivering the duties of the organisation, or indeed protect the interests of London’s transport users.

It was unanimously agreed that London TravelWatch could not proceed with the Paxco model as proposed and that a letter should be sent to the Chair of the Transport Committee to this effect.

Action: SG/JC

7 Future accommodation options

JC informed members that she was investigating various future accommodation options to identify which would be the most cost effective. These included remaining on one floor at 6 Middle Street, moving into Passenger Focus' offices at Drummond Gate, moving to City Hall to share accommodation with the GLA, or moving to self-contained premises in Dexter House sub-let from the London Pension Fund (part of the GLA family). It was noted that the option to share accommodation with Passenger Focus was only available if the Paxco model proceeded. Members discussed the draft costs and were disappointed to note that co-location with Passenger Focus would not lead to the savings that had previously been anticipated.

JC reminded members that she would need to formally serve notice to London TravelWatch's landlords on 19 February 2012 if London TravelWatch was to move and so she would need a decision shortly on accommodation.

8 Chief Executive's report

JC presented a Chief Executive's report which covered general organisation issues, including staffing matters and progress on introducing new finance and HR policies and procedures.

Members noted the report and agreed that the six-month temporary contract of the Corporate Support Assistant should be extended for a further three months.

Action: JB

9 Any other business of which advance notice had been given

Members were informed that the next Governance Committee meeting will be held on 28 February 2012 and that a Board visit had also been scheduled to take place that day.

SG informed members that she would be away on annual leave from 4 February to 16 February 2012 and that DL would be deputising in her absence.

Action: DL

GC/ 24.01.12