
Minutes

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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Governance Committee held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 27 June 2011, 10.45 - 12.45 hrs

Present:

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

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 6)
Tim Bellenger (TB)	Director, Research (item 7)
Sharon Malley (SM)	Senior Committee Administrator (item 7)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Janet Cooke (JC), Chief Executive.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2011 were approved as a correct record of the meeting, subject to one minor amendment under item 8, to amend "Carolyn" to read "Caroline" Pidgeon.

3. Matters arising

SG reported that she and DL had held a lengthy meeting with DL and JC where they had discussed all aspects of the review and highlighted points that needed action. SG expressed that she anticipated that by August 2011, the organisation would have a different shape and many of the issues that had concerned the board from this year should be resolved.

4. Finance report

The forecast revenue result is a deficit for the 2011/12 financial year of £119,000 due to variances largely related to staff pay and other staff related costs incurred due to the organisational restructure. This will leave a closing general reserve of £72,000 as at 31 March 2012, the bulk of which will be represented by fixed assets.

PE pointed out that as a consequence of the staff severance costs to be incurred later in the year, a cash flow deficit will arise in October and to cover this forecast deficit it had been necessary to request an early payment of grant funding from the GLA in September. Budget holders were asked to adhere rigidly to their budgets as the cash flow this year is very tight.

PE explained that the expected £1.2 million grant income from the GLA for 2012/13 is based on this year minus 15% in order to achieve the 25% savings over two years requested by the GLA.

Members discussed the agreed programme of voluntary redundancies as outlined financially in the Cash Flow Actual/Forecast 2011/12 report and their impact on the budget forecast. PT drew attention to factors which might impact on forecast expenditure figures. In addition, PT referred to a new proposal by a staff member for a voluntary reduction in working hours to offset a larger staffing establishment. It was felt that this could not be currently considered as it was outside of the new organisational structure and plans.

PT confirmed that the redundancy programme required staff to work out their notice period and members commented that these notices do not have to run on calendar months as long as the period is served. Members asked for vigilance so that key work that was outstanding is completed by staff who are leaving. They also asked for a work programme in respect of BD whose remit would be to assist with transitional issues, such as the mainstreaming of knowledge on Consumer Law work programme.

Action: PT/JC

PT advised members of the timeline for the submission of the draft budget and business plan to the Transport Committee which is as follows:-

- 12 August 2011 - Draft budget and business plan submission
- 23 August 2011 - Informal meeting with the Transport Committee lead members
- 24 August 2011 - Final version of draft budget and business plan submission
- 6 September 2011 - Transport Committee meeting to consider draft budget and business plan to be reported to BMAC.

Members agreed to brainstorm their ideas or general principles for the draft business plan at the end of this meeting to assist with the process and asked for this to be followed up by email working.

Action: ALL

Members noted their thanks to PE for the clarity of the presentation of the accounts. Members agreed to PE's suggestion that the cash flow forecasts could be produced on a different colour paper in future for further clarity.

5. Chief Executive's report

JC had circulated a brief confidential note updating members on her annual leave dates; progress on the internal review; other staff issues; the provisional business planning timetable; board member recruitment and the proposed amendment to the Localism Bill in the House of Lords.

Members expressed their concern for the timeline process of outsourcing and also a strong desire for the second phase of the agreed redundancy programme to be implemented within the next month, subject to written confirmation from the GLA in respect of early grant funding in September 2011.

Members' succession planning was discussed and members asked SG to write to the GLA pointing out the succession issues regarding Board membership and the vacancies that will soon arise due to current Board members retiring in January 2013.

Action: SG

Members discussed the Localism Bill and its implications for London TravelWatch. SG had been advised that an amendment affecting London TravelWatch had been tabled, but that it may not be discussed until the autumn. SG agreed to write to peers in the summer and in late autumn regarding the proposed amendment and London TravelWatch's position.

Action: SG

6. Update to business continuity plan

BD presented the report which was discussed by Members. Members raised issues about on line back up and the location of the recovery site, suggesting that locating the recovery site in the suburbs further away from London would be a better option and also the possibility of sharing a recovery site with either Passenger Focus or the GLA, should London TravelWatch co-locate with them.

PT informed members that the archives for finance and HR records were located at Wincanton, Rainham.

The testing arrangements were discussed. BD suggested a quarterly planned orientation with staff so that they are aware of their roles and a disaster scenario simulation every two years and to alternatively test the telephone call tree and supplier list and elements of the infrastructure every 6 months.

Members suggested that staff travel patterns and telephone details should be made available to Board member for emergency use only. PT explained that not all staff members would be amenable to this and that the current system operated as a telephone tree cascade starting with the Chief Executive who contacts the SMT who then contact staff members. It was agreed that staff should be asked for their permission regarding inclusion of their details on a list for use in a crisis situation.

It was noted that much of the plan would become outdated when the restructuring had taken place, as staff responsibilities change. BD informed members that it was in the business plan to review this document by December 2011.

Members thanked BD for his work and suggested that as the document included roles allocated to people who would be leaving soon, that as an interim measure, those roles should be re-allocated to those who would still be in post prior to the document being reviewed in December 2011.

Action: BD

7. Forthcoming Board meetings

TB and SM informed members that the Board meeting on 12 July 2011 would include feedback from the London TravelWatch bus surgery in Stratford and the following presentations with an Olympic theme:-

- Keeping London moving during the Olympics - Clare Springett, Head of Travel Demand Management at Surface Transport in TfL.
- London's Olympic Legacy - Hugh Sumner, Director of Transport, Olympic Delivery Authority
- London's Streets - Garrett Emmerson, Chief Operating Officer, London Streets

Members asked TB to produce a briefing paper for them on the TfL presentation prior to the Board meeting and requested a half hour briefing session before the Board meeting to discuss this. In addition, Members asked for a list of known concerns to be prepared and sent to TfL and for this to be given some press coverage. Members also asked for a copy of the Bus Surgery feedback to be sent to London Borough of Newham.

Action: TB/SM

TB & SM confirmed that the Board meeting on 27 September 2011 will focus on London rail including DLR, Overground and Tramlink. Mike Brown will be invited to answer questions on these three modes using a similar format to the meeting with Peter Hendy, focusing in particular on infrastructure issues. The issue of incomplete Oyster journeys and the reasons for these will also be raised. TB will group the issues into strategic and minor issues for the meeting. Other topics on the agenda will include a revisit of the Mayor's Transport Strategy; reliability and customer satisfaction at London Rail, and an update on the progress of the research programming website.

Action: TB/SM

TB informed members that the research topics on this year's business plan were to establish passenger priorities for improvements for the Underground and follow up on Oyster issues. Members asked for research to remain as a standing item on future Governance Committee agendas.

Action: TB/GC

Members agreed the draft meeting schedule for 2012, as circulated, without amendment and that all future Board and Governance committee meetings will take place in the third or fourth week of the month to allow for the accounts to be signed off before the meetings.

Action: SM/GC

8. Business planning cycle for 2012-13

Members suggested the following principles for consideration in the business planning cycle for 2012-13:- that there is a focus on outcome-based objectives; tighter guidelines for casework; a priority on issues that affect consumers e.g.

value for money and cost; a move away from focusing on a single mode, and greater collaboration with Passenger Focus on all our work.

Members also suggested the following topics for consideration:-

- Formal review of the GLA review
- Activity resulting from TfL Complaints data
- Compensation schemes
- Raising awareness and the profile of London TravelWatch
- Bus surgeries with TfL support. Possible locations: - Kingston, Southall, Enfield, Harrow, Edgware, Barnet, Streatham or Wimbledon.
- Simplified fares
- Underground timetables

Members requested that the following work be discontinued:-

- Contact with local authorities
- Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs) and franchises except those specific to London – these should be considered in far less detail than had previously been the case.
- Work on Europe, following consultation with JC.

Members requested that managers should seek input from staff from each section on what areas of work should be discontinued and for there to be greater control on staff attendance at external meetings due to pressure on resources. PT advised that staff awareness was already high in respect of limited staff resources when deciding to attend or decline meetings.

Action: TB/BD/PT

Members also requested that the suggestions previously provided by SL should be incorporated, where appropriate and for further work on business planning to continue by email.

Action: All

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

Members requested that a very clear letter be sent to all London TravelWatch's stakeholders, similar to the one recently sent by Passenger Focus to their stakeholders, to communicate our new priorities and structure externally to stakeholders, Assembly members and London MPs.

Action: JC