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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 27 September 2011, 14.30 - 15.30 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 7)
Gytha Chinweze (GC)	Executive Assistant

### 1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2011 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

### 3. Matters arising

Members were pleased to note that the proposed amendment to the Localism Bill tabled in the House of Lords had been withdrawn. If enacted, this would have seen London TravelWatch abolished and its functions folded into the London Assembly,

SG reported that a meeting of the Implementation Group had taken place. The next meeting would be held on 10 November 2011 with Passenger Focus in attendance to discuss the possibility of working more closely with them in the future to make savings across a range of services.

Members confirmed that London TravelWatch needed to retain an integrated focus to what it does as this is how it adds value. They agreed that there was a better justification

for it to work with Passenger Focus than with the Assembly because of the political nature of the Assembly and the need for London TravelWatch to be seen as completely independent in order for it to do its work effectively. Members expressed concern that legislative implications might restrict opportunities for closer working.

#### 4. Chief Executive's report

JC presented a report covering the following matters: - general issues, staff issues, staffing arrangements for the Christmas/New Year holiday, the business plan and budget bid 2012-13, the Localism Bill, the risk register and the misuse of the TravelWatch name.

Members agreed to close the office between Christmas and the New Year holidays, to grant staff an additional day's leave on 28 December 2011 and to require them to use their annual leave entitlement to cover the other two days.

#### 5. Update on the Internal Review

JC gave members a detailed verbal update on the progress of the internal review:-

- The office had closed in August for re-organisation.
  - A staff workshop would take place in the autumn to inform staff of new ways of working.
  - The remaining redundancies were progressing; other staff had taken on extra work and other options for the remaining work re-allocation were being considered.
  - Passenger Focus had not been willing to take on London TravelWatch's HR and finance functions and the GLA was not willing to take on the work unless London TravelWatch was in City Hall. JC was investigating alternative options which included the option to retain this work in-house with a new line management structure and additional support. A report would come to the Governance Committee when more details were available.
- Action: JC**
- The budget assumption on accommodation remained that London TravelWatch would relinquish the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and all staff would move to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Middle Street in August 2012 when there would be a break clause in the lease. As members did not consider the City Hall option to be feasible because of the issue of independence, other options were being explored.

Members formally recorded their thanks to staff for the way they had dealt with the transition and re-organisation.

Members expressed their concern at the delay in progressing the remaining redundancies. JC reminded them that delays had arisen in making suitable outsourcing arrangements for finance and HR and there had been a need to ensure that members were fully updated on the financial implications of their decision. She was now able to write to the GLA to make sure that they were aware of the situation and request a variation to the grant payment profile for 2012-13 in order that the matter could be progressed. It was agreed to conclude this by the end of the week.

**Action: JC**

## **6. London TravelWatch Audited Financial Statements for the period ended 31 March 2011**

Members noted the London TravelWatch Audited Financial Statements for the period ended 31 March 2011.

## **7. Finance report – July and August 2011**

PE presented the finance report for July and August 2011. Members noted both reports.

PE reported that the financial situation as at 31 August 2011 showed that the solvency position remained adequate with a surplus of current assets over current liabilities of £170,000. The bank balance as at 31 August 2011 was £160,000. Costs were being closely monitored due to the close operating margins.

## **8. London TravelWatch Work Plan 2011-12 Exceptions Report**

JC presented a progress report against the London TravelWatch Work Plan to mid-September 2011 which showed that the majority of previously identified milestones had either been met or were on course but highlighted some areas of slippage.

Members asked for a more detailed report of the work of the Policy and Investigation team and requested that any additional resources received should be noted on the workplan in section 9.11

**Action: JC**

It was agreed progress against the workplan was good particularly considering the disruption faced by the organisation in recent months.

## **9. London TravelWatch risk register**

Members noted the risk register had been completely reviewed by the Senior Management Team as a result of which several risk areas had been re-evaluated. In view of the many changes to London TravelWatch's operating environment that had occurred during the past year, they agreed that the Governance Committee should also consider these in detail later in 2011.

**Action: GC**

## **10. Any other business of which advance notice has been given**

Members discussed officer attendance at external meetings. JC assured members that careful consideration was given to make best use of time overall.

**GC/ 27.9.11**