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## Minutes

Agenda item 4  
Drafted 28.11.12

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### Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 27 November 2012 at London TravelWatch

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#### Present

##### Members

David Barry, Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, David Leibling (Acting Chair)

##### Observer

Stephen Locke, Chair Designate

##### Guests

Michele Dix                                      Managing Director for Planning, Transport for London (Item 10)

##### Stakeholder Representative

Helen Deakin                                      Strategic Communications Officer, Transport for London

##### Two members of the public

##### Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer (Items 8 to 11)

## **1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**

The Acting Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting, including the Chair Designate, Stephen Locke, who was attending the meeting as an observer. The Acting Chair gave information to attendees about fire and safety.

## **2 Apologies for absence**

Sophia Lambert had sent apologies for absence.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

David Barry declared that he was now in receipt of a Freedom Pass.

## **4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update**

The Acting Chair said he had been appointed to the Mayor of London's Roads Task Force and had attended an update meeting with officers and two meetings of the Task Force. Two further meetings were scheduled, for January and March, along with a stakeholder event in January.

With the Chief Executive, he had attended a National Rail Accessibility Group meeting at Portcullis House, as part of its work to raise the profile of accessibility. As well as members of both Houses of Parliament, there were also at the meeting train operators and lobby groups, and a video speech from Norman Baker MP, but apparently no one from the Department for Transport.

He attended the TfL Rail Underground Advisory Group, chaired by Mike Brown (Managing Director, London Rail) and various business groups, looking at tube and Overground performance and the upgrade programme.

He and the Chief Executive had attended the City Hall service of remembrance.

He, the Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Investigation had attended a bilateral meeting with Michael Roberts and Peter Twigg of the Association of Train Operating Companies, at which they discussed franchising, ticketing and changes to rail in South London.

He had attended the London TravelWatch transport user engagement event at Harrow, alongside members of staff, and a more detailed report on that event would be coming to a future committee.

He noted that a former Chair of London TravelWatch, Brian Cooke, had been appointed to the Board of Transport for London.

In his role as London's passenger representation on the Board of Passenger Focus, the Acting Chair said that there had been two meetings since the last London TravelWatch meeting. The first considered franchising, communications, stakeholder engagement and bus research methodology. The second looked at smart ticketing, business planning, passenger panels and working with London TravelWatch and train operating companies on complaints handling. It was noted that Passenger Focus's casework levels were still high, with around 1,000 appeals per quarter.

At the meeting there had been a presentation from Chris Gibb of Virgin Trains and the Acting Chair had asked whether it would be possible for their trains to make additional stops at Watford Junction. Mr Gibb said that because of the speed and frequency of the trains through Watford Junction, adding stopping trains would significantly reduce the capacity of the line.

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 25 September 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the addition of the words 'stakeholder meeting' after 'roads taskforce' in the first sentence of Item 6.1.

It was noted, in relation to Item 8 at the bottom of page 5, that the Department for Transport (DfT) had now agreed that the mechanism for making temporary timetable changes should be simplified by reference to a good practice guide, which London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus would now work on. The Director, Policy and Investigation, added that train operating companies would now need to consult London TravelWatch or Passenger Focus before implementing temporary timetables. These were good legacy outcomes for passengers following the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Governance Committee minutes of 26 June, 24 July and 25 September were noted.

## **6 Matters arising (LTW419)**

### **6.1 Big Red Bus Book**

It was noted that bus drivers were instructed to pull up at the front of the box marked in the road when stopping for passengers but that there were no instructions for stopping near to the flag. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that flags were generally positioned at the boundary between two properties and so may not be the best place for buses to stop. The Policy Officer agreed to review this issue and update members.

**Action: Policy Officer**

### **6.2 Consumer Rights Directive consultation**

Under the supervision of the Director of Policy and Investigation, Angela Okello (Caseworker), had responded to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' consultation on the implementation of the Consumer Rights Directive. She had been able to provide a good deal of detailed information on why the directive should include transport helplines. Members agreed that the response was excellent and thanked Ms Okello for her work.

### **6.3 Maritime passengers' rights consultation**

It was noted that the Safety and Policy Adviser had responded to a DfT consultation on maritime passengers' rights and that he had now been invited to meet the DfT to discuss the response in detail. It was important that the legislative framework was

consistent and that the statutory roles of TfL and London TravelWatch were recognised in any new procedures.

## **7 Actions taken (LTW420)**

It was noted that the Acting Chair had also been at the ATOC meeting on 9 November. It was also noted that SEFT stood for South East flexible ticketing.

The meeting to discuss TfL's customer service proposals followed up issues that had been discussed at a previous London TravelWatch meeting but the proposals were not yet in the public domain.

The Chief Executive said that there had been more meetings than usual during the period as everyone sought to catch up after summer and the Olympics.

It was noted that the next meeting with TfL Managing Directors would take place later in the week.

## **8 River crossing proposals (LTW424)**

The Policy Officer presented a report on two proposed new river crossings in east London. The report was taken early in order to allow members to consider the issues in advance of the presentation by Michele Dix. TfL was proposing to create a new road tunnel from the Greenwich peninsula to Silvertown and a new ferry between Thamesmead and Beckton.

It was noted that the Silvertown road tunnel would have no restrictions for vehicles within the current loading gauges. This would hopefully reduce the number of closures on the nearby Blackwall tunnel caused by blockages from over-height vehicles. There was no funding identified for the tunnel and so TfL was proposing a charging model. It was noted that that this would mean the Blackwall tunnel also being charged, although there were no proposals to charge for the Rotherhithe tunnel further west along the Thames.

It was noted that the proposals hinted that TfL may wish in future to remove the legal obligation to provide a free ferry at Woolwich, although this would require primary legislation. Members would be concerned about the potential loss of this service.

Previously the London TravelWatch position on the need to provide additional river crossings in east London was neutral. Members had been positive about the use of charging schemes both as funding vehicles and to manage demand. Members hoped the tolling system for the new crossings would be automatic and sophisticated enough to allow for variable charges depending on time of day and type of vehicle.

Members agreed that they were broadly supportive of the new crossing proposals. However, they noted the need to ensure that the infrastructure at each end of each crossing would be robust enough to cope with the anticipated traffic volumes. In particular, attention would need to be paid to the needs of buses, pedestrians and cyclists, as well as private cars. Members would like to see buses given priority at the crossings in order that they could maintain reliable timetables. In addition, TfL should give some thought to restricting the Blackwall tunnel to cars and buses once the Silvertown tunnel was open, to avoid the problems caused by over-height vehicles.

Members agreed that they would not like to see the Woolwich ferry closed while there was still demand from users.

## **9 Response to the Richard Brown review (LTW421)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he and the Chief Executive had attended a meeting with members of the franchising review team to discuss London TravelWatch's response to the review. The meeting had been lengthy and detailed, with the review team seeking to understand the evidence behind London TravelWatch's views.

London TravelWatch had argued in favour of more local involvement in franchises and that services should have much greater focus on passengers. The current 'cap and collar' arrangements insulated operators from the financial effects of poor operation. There was not enough incentive for operators to innovate or market their way out of problems.

London TravelWatch also argued that franchise arrangements should not be 'one size fits all'. For example, franchises based on urban commuters could apply a concession model of the sort operated by LOROL, while longer distance commuter franchises still needed to recognise the importance of TfL and London. By comparison, inter-city franchises were more market driven, with less predictable passenger numbers, more affected by marketing activity, and could be considered for open access.

The Acting Chair said that this illustrated the importance of London Travelwatch setting out in detail how the particular needs of London's passengers could best be met.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that rolling stock contracts were not discussed in detail during the meeting but that his view would be that operators should be free to buy or lease stock most appropriate to their needs.

It was noted that the Richard Brown review was due to report by the end of the year, as was also the case with the Laidlaw review of the West Coast franchise process.

Members considered the possible electrification of the line between Gospel Oak and Barking. It was noted that TfL and the DfT disagreed over who would receive most benefit from electrification and therefore who would be responsible for its funding, with TfL saying the greatest benefit would be to freight and the DfT saying TfL would benefit more as there would be efficiencies from being able to resource the line from within London Overground's existing electric trains fleet. This would mean that there would no longer be a need to maintain a separate diesel train fleet solely for the purpose of operating this route. There was also a disagreement about the actual cost of the works. Members acknowledged that they had no remit over freight but were still frustrated by this impasse because of the detrimental knock-on impact for passengers, both on the line itself and on other routes such as the West Coast Mainline (London Midland / Virgin Trains) and on Essex Thameside (c2c).

## 10 Roads Task Force (LTW423)

Michele Dix, Managing Director for Planning at Transport for London, gave a presentation on the work of the Roads Task Force and issues relating to roads more generally. The presentation covered the following areas:

- The Roads Task Force was comprised of people with an interest in transport but individuals were not expected to represent specific interests. Each member was expected to commit to solving the problems on the roads and to engage constructively.
- TfL was responsible for writing the final report, due in March, but the Task Force was an important sounding board.
- Roads could be categorised according to their usage and location, with conflicts arising from different modes using the roads in different ways and roads serving different functions for different groups.
- The Task Force was considering how to make the best of existing infrastructure through improved technology, how to manage travel demand more effectively and whether it was possible or desirable to increase the amount of road space.
- Congestion needed to be addressed because growth in London would mean the problem increasing with time, and to respond to problems of air quality and road safety.
- 55 stakeholders responded to the initial consultation on this issue along with 59 individuals. The stakeholders included boroughs, utilities and transport groups.
- Emerging responses to the consultation included calls for the reintroduction of road user hierarchy and the need to allocate primary functions for roads in London. Stakeholders also offered solutions to the problems such as company travel plans, travel demand management, investment in alternatives (particularly rail) and funding new infrastructure through tolls.

The Acting Chair said that he was concerned there may be conflicts between the Task Force and the boroughs. Ms Dix said there would not necessarily be a conflict and that the strategy would be seeking to satisfy all users.

The Acting Chair asked whether funding was being made available for infrastructure work. Ms Dix said this would be confirmed when Transport for London's business plan was published.

The Acting Chair asked what success for the project would look like and Ms Dix said that a subgroup of the Task Force was looking at key performance indicators. A significant issue was the trade-off between delayed journeys and reliability, and whether road users would accept some lengthening of journeys if they could reliably predict how long those journeys would take. Some research had been done on this point as part of the work on smoothing the traffic flow.

Ms Dix said that tolling was provided for as an option within the Mayor's Transport Strategy and that it was under consideration now for the two proposed new river crossings. She said the ability to restrict high vehicles to the new Silvertown road tunnel would depend on details including lane configurations that had not yet been completed. The Acting Chair stressed the need to ensure that the infrastructure at each end of the new crossings was adequate to cope with the volumes of traffic using them.

Ms Dix said that TfL was working with the boroughs on Local Implementation Plan funding as TfL wanted to see boroughs bidding for larger schemes.

The Chair Designate asked whether TfL could do more to join up with the information provided in satellite navigation systems. Ms Dix said she hoped to be able give road users as much information as possible, including in-car, but this technology was at an early stage.

Members thanked Ms Dix for the informative presentation and interesting discussion.

It was noted that as David Leibling's appointment was ad personam and he would continue to input to the task force until it completed its work.

## **11 London TravelWatch research programme (LTW422)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented his report on London TravelWatch's future research programme. He said that his team would be working on follow-ups to previous research on Oyster card use and London Underground ticket offices as well as looking at passenger experiences of claiming compensation. Further ahead, the team would be following up work on walking and interchange, especially in relation to major works at stations.

The Chief Executive said it was important that the lessons from the Olympics about joint working were not lost, with major stations such as Victoria and London Bridge already seeming to be fragmenting again into different sectors operated by different organisations.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that TfL hoped to have published all its research findings for 2012 by the end of February 2013. London TravelWatch would be working with TfL on its research into passenger priorities for the Underground.

## **12 Any other business**

The Acting Chair noted that this was the final Board meeting of the current membership, although one more Committee meeting was due to take place in December. He thanked members for their work and wished his successors well.

The Chief Executive thanked the Acting Chair and members for their work over the past year four years during which London TravelWatch had achieved significant outcomes for the travelling public.

**13 Resolution to move into confidential session**

It was resolved, under section 15(2)(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the item(s) to be discussed, it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded for a section of the meeting.

During the confidential session, members reviewed the meeting and considered TfL proposals relating to customer service.

The next meeting of the full Board will be held on 29 January 2013 at City Hall.