
Minutes

Agenda item : 3
Drafted : 27.4.10

**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 10 March 2010
at 6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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Present

Members

David Barry (In the Chair and Vice-Chair), Terry Bennett, Daniel Francis, Sophia Lambert, Teena Lashmore, Sharon Grant (London TravelWatch Chair) (min. 4 to 12)

David Leibling (Observer)

Secretariat

John Cartledge	Safety and Policy Advisor (min. 9)
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Bryan Davey	Director, Public Liaison
Jo deBank	Communications Officer (min. 4)
Mark Donoghue	Committee Administrator
Christine Evans	Casework Manager

Minutes

- 1 Chair's introduction, pre-meeting announcements and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Sarah Pond and Lorna Reith.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of members' interests. The full list may be viewed on the London TravelWatch website at <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/3861/get>.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 25 November 2009 were approved and signed for the record subject to the following amendment :

Minute 10(b) (CRM Dynamics database update) the date that the old database would not be used from should read as 1 March 2010 not 1 February 2010.

4 Matters arising (CA034)

A member asked why item 2.3 (customers to be given a clear indication, by Train Operating Companies, that they are being redirected to third party websites when they purchase tickets) on the matters arising report was marked as complete. It was agreed to follow-up progress for the July meeting.

C8.7.09, minute 4 (How to complain leaflet)

The Chief Executive noted that the draft leaflet would be submitted at the May meeting and published in June 2010. The Communications Officer reported that money was available to print a hard copy in the next financial year 2010/11. When addresses for operators are included the leaflet became 5 pages long.

The Chair asked for two versions of the leaflet (one with addresses and one without) to be circulated via e-mail before the next meeting.

Action: Communications Officer

On item 2.7 members felt that the response times to London TravelWatch for operators should be standardised, but not for them to be so low that a proper investigation could not take place.

C25.11.09/6 (to reinstate the "Case of the week" e-mail)

The Chief Executive reported that the e-mail would be sent out by the end of the week.

C/25.11.09/8ii (upgrade on database and glossary of definitions)

The Director, Public Liaison reported that the definition of categories was included in the performance report.

B/10.11.09/8 (TfL 0845 telephone number)

The Chair reported that a briefing by Transport for London (TfL) would be provided shortly on this subject.

C/27.1.10/8 (CIV Tickets)

The Chair of the Fares and Ticketing committee reported that he had sent a letter to the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) regarding this case.

5 Actions taken (CA035)

The paper was noted for the record.

6 Performance report (CA036)

The Director, Public Liaison explained that the data was taken from 2 databases (the new and old). The report is for the three month period (October to December 2009). The upward trend in performance has been broadly maintained. Part 2 of the report records the number of enquiries, initials, appeals and other types of complaint during the three month report. Part 3 is a performance update on the number of cases open on the database as of 4 March 2010 and their status.

Whilst members welcomed the continued upward trend in performance, they were concerned that on target 2 around 10% of cases took more than 10 days to refer. The Director, Public Liaison noted that he was working to prevent this from happening.

The Chair of London TravelWatch noted that almost 20% of the operator's response letters (target 4) took over 10 days. She asked why this was. The Director, Public Liaison replied that this was too many. If a Caseworker did not receive a satisfactory response they would go back to the operator.

The Director, Public Liaison noted that he would now be producing quarterly performance data.

7 Policy issues for consideration (CA037)

The Director, Public Liaison reported that whilst this issue of supplying season ticket guides to passengers is not new, the Casework officers were keen to have it discussed. Train Operating Companies (TOCs) do not have a consistent policy on the distribution of information on season tickets to passengers.

Members felt that a small guide, similar to the one that TfL issued, would be suitable. They felt that a guide could be produced jointly with Passenger Focus.

The London TravelWatch member who was on the Passenger Focus board would discuss this issue further with them and report back.

8 Casework review update (CA033)

The Chief Executive of London TravelWatch reported that the review had begun a year ago. All recommendations were agreed apart from the removal of London TravelWatch's telephone number from buses. The review had identified how vulnerable the casework team were to peaks and troughs in workload and staff absence. A more pro-active approach was now in place. Some minor changes had taken place to the policies and procedures. The Casework Committee had now become the Consumer Affairs Committee to focus more on policy issues and had a more strategic role. The new database went live on 1 October 2009. The old system

had been turned off. The internal targets would be changed to match the targets that London TravelWatch reports to the GLA. Future performance reports would include TOCs response times to London TravelWatch and appellants.

She concluded by noting that she did not appreciate how much time, particularly by senior management, had been needed. There had been improvements and there is now an opportunity to build on them. There is a sustained upward trend in performance. The priority in the past was on the quality of performance, now it is on meeting the 5 day acknowledgement target. It should be possible to do both. A review of procedures had taken place and a new handbook would be available to staff.

The Chair of London TravelWatch felt that the review meant the casework team were on the first rung of the ladder. The database had demonstrated what it was capable of delivering. She felt that the targets now needed to be looked at. Cases needed to be completed quicker. Performance needed to continue to improve alongside an increase in standards. The performance of casework needed to be benchmarked alongside other organisations.

A member felt that the outstanding items for the review needed to be completed in the next two meetings of the committee.

9 Overlaps between London TravelWatch's and Passengers Focus' remits

The Safety and Policy Advisor reported noted that the report was part of a joint effort along with the Chief Executive and the Casework Manager. As long as London TravelWatch's powers remain as those set out in the current statute, it has to fulfil its obligations. London TravelWatch is the only organisation left from the Rail Passengers Councils (RPC) (which were abolished in 2005 and replaced by Passenger Focus).

Members felt that the paper was helpful. A member asked how many cases were sent to Passenger Focus. The casework manager replied not many. The Director, Public Liaison noted that 172 cases were sent to London TravelWatch from Passenger Focus. Around half, 81, were appeals.

The Chief Executive noted that the Casework team were only taking cases that were within London TravelWatch's remit. The London TravelWatch Chair felt that there should be a decision making tree, so that the reason why a case is within our remit is clear. The Chair asked for this to be available to members.

Action: Casework Manager

10 Casework update

a) The Director, Public Liaison reported that the Casework team had been on a learning curve with the new database, but are now more comfortable with it. They now have to use one database (the old one has been turned off). Further work needs to be done on accurate reporting and systems and he is in regular contact with the contractors.

b) He noted that there is a success field in the new database.

11 Any other business

The Chair noted his thanks to the Casework Manager for the last 25 years of service and recognised her long service to London TravelWatch.

The Chair of London TravelWatch also recorded her thanks and the recognised the support the Casework Manager had given to members.

12 Resolution to move into confidential session

The meeting resolved, under section 15(b) of schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, that by reason of the confidential nature of the next following item/s, that it was desirable in the public interest that the public should be excluded from the meeting.

In confidential session, members discussed the confidential minutes of the last meeting, discussed audits and reviewed the meeting.

The next meeting would take place on 12 May 2010.

13 Glossary

ATOC	Association of Train Operating Companies
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
GLA	Greater London Authority
RPC	Rail Passengers Councils
TfL	Transport for London