
Minutes

Drafted 25.01.12

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24 January 2012 at London TravelWatch

Contents

- 1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Declarations of interest
- 4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update
- 5 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2011
- 6 Matters arising (LTW 394)
- 7 Actions taken (LTW 395)
- 8 Presentation by Shashi Verma
- 9 Research on London Underground ticket office staffing (LTW396)
- 10 Railway command paper
- 11 High Speed 2
- 12 TfL performance report Q2 2011-12 (LTW397)
- 13 Appointment of subsidiary bodies and terms of reference (LTW398)
- 14 London TravelWatch staffing reorganisation
- 15 Any other business
- 16 Resolution to move into confidential session

Present

Members

David Barry, Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant (Chair), Sophia Lambert, David Leibling (Deputy Chair),

Guests

Shashi Verma Director of Customer Experience, Transport for London (Items 8-9)

Stakeholder Representatives

Matt Winfield Stakeholder Engagement Manager, TfL

Local transport users

Secretariat

John Cartledge	Safety & Policy Adviser (from Item 8)
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Gytha Chinweze	Executive Assistant
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant

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

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting and made the standard housekeeping announcements.

2 **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

3 **Declarations of interest**

There were no additional declarations of interest.

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

The Chair reported that her discussions with the London Assembly on the implementation of their review of London TravelWatch continued, with a focus on investigating the possibility of closer working with Passenger Focus. These discussions were ongoing.

There had been several examples of positive media coverage in recent weeks, including the reporting of London TravelWatch's mystery shopping survey of London Underground ticket offices, London TravelWatch's comments on fare increases and also on criminal record checks for taxi drivers. The Chair welcomed the government's decision not to proceed with proposals to relax the regulations on this, which was in line with London TravelWatch's own position.

Several regular update meetings had been held with various transport operators, along with briefings for Mayoral candidates on London TravelWatch's priorities for passengers for the forthcoming Mayoral term.

The Deputy Chair reported on the two meetings of the Passenger Focus board held since the last London TravelWatch board. He said that Passenger Focus intended to look more closely at the issue of penalty fares, including whether fare evasion should be decriminalised. It was noted that London TravelWatch had value to add to such an inquiry and should look to work in parallel on this.

The Deputy Chair said that Passenger Focus had heard from Anna Walker, Chair of the Office of Rail Regulation, at its last meeting. He also reported that Passenger Focus had published its report *Future priorities for the West Coast Main Line: Released capacity from a potential high speed line*. It was noted that London TravelWatch had not been involved in the findings of this report and that the benefits of London TravelWatch's experience were in danger of being lost. It was agreed that copies of the report would be circulated to members.

Action: Executive Assistant

5 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Director, Policy & Investigation, said in relation to Item 5 that he had received a response from Network Rail shortly after the meeting. In addition, in relation to Item 6.2 on fares increases, he had received and circulated to members a response from the Mayor.

The minutes of the Governance Committees of 2011 were noted. The Chair reported that there had been two special meetings of the Governance Committee during 2011 in addition to those reported that were confidential as they dealt with matters of staffing.

6 Matters arising (LTW394)

6.1 Transport for London (TfL) complaints data

The Executive Assistant reported that TfL complaints data would not now be reported to the TfL board in February as previously advised. Matt Winfield from TfL said that the data was all available on the Greater London Authority website in response to a question from a London Assembly member but it was not currently in the format requested by London TravelWatch. He said that the reporting of complaints data would now fall within Shashi Verma's directorate and the reporting would be taken forward by his team as 'business as usual'.

Members agreed to raise this with Shashi Verma when he made his presentation later in the meeting.

6.2 Passenger engagement events

The Chief Executive reported that she and the Communications Officer were aiming to hold the next event in February.

Action: Communications Officer

6.3 Bus patronage figures

It was noted that London TravelWatch now held information on patronage of various bus routes, which would be useful when showing the effect on passengers when considering proposals for individual traffic orders that affected bus routes.

6.4 Use of non-geographic phone numbers

It was reported that the issue of transport providers employing potentially expensive non-geographic phone numbers would be considered in greater detail at the next meeting of the Consumer Affairs committee in February.

6.5 Incomplete journeys on Oyster

The Director, Policy & Investigation, circulated a photo of new Oyster validators at Wimbledon showing the sort of labelling that London TravelWatch had called for in its report on incomplete journeys on Oyster. He reported that National Express East Anglia had installed large new posters telling people to touch in and out at some of its stations.

7 Actions taken (LTW395)

The report on actions taken was noted.

8 Presentation by Shashi Verma

Shashi Verma, Director of Customer Experience at TfL, gave a presentation on his role and customer services at TfL.

Mr Verma said that one of the aims of the reorganisation was to improve the way TfL dealt with customers, so that it presented one face irrespective of mode or payment. His directorate was organised into several teams including Contact Centre Operations, which covered enquiries relating to Oyster, Underground and Surface Transport. The Cycle Hire and Congestion Charge contact centres would be integrated once their existing contracts came to an end. The other teams in his directorate were Customer Technology, Revenue Policies, Infrastructure Operations, Analytics, Business Development, Transformation Strategy and Transformation Delivery.

The in-house contact centre employed 500 agents in two locations, and sat alongside two outsourced contact centres. TfL was seeking to remove the barriers between the different helpline numbers and this process continued, with performance at contact centres improving over the last 12 months.

The outsourced contact centres dealt with child travelcards and on line cards. The process for child cards was working well now, following problems last year associated with postal strikes. The application process was now on line, which meant that the rejection rate fell from 33% to less than 1%. It was hoped that the card for 16-17 year olds would be on line by September.

In August, TfL improved the way that customers could view their Oyster accounts on line, with journeys now being displayed more clearly. There was also an opportunity for customers to give feedback about the website through the site itself, which many customers had taken advantage of. The next change to the website would take place in two weeks, and would fix some outstanding issues and allow the site to be accessed by all customers, not just those who had bought products on line.

In response to questions, Mr Verma confirmed that those who called TfL to complain would be given a reference number but there were still issues with giving out reference numbers to those who complained on line and this was under review. He added that the targets for responding to emails were the same as for responding to postal enquiries, ie that there would be a response within 20 days, and this needed reconsidering.

Mr Verma said that TfL had presented the case for extending Oyster beyond London, including the fact that the introduction of Oyster pay-as-you-go on national rail had seen an increase in ridership of 30 million journeys raising an additional £80 million in ticket revenue. However, the government appeared committed to pursuing the ITSO option. Mr Verma confirmed that the barriers and readers currently installed would be able to handle both Oyster and ITSO technologies and new equipment could be rolled out in months, if approval was given to go ahead.

Mr Verma apologised for the delay in publishing Transport for London's complaints data by mode, and information on charter refunds, as requested by London TravelWatch. He said that the data would be published by the end of the current quarter.

Mr Verma said that only 4,000 newsagents could vend Oyster products across London because producing new vending units was prohibitively expensive. However, this was still a very extensive retail network and compared favourably to, for example, New York, where there were only 170 outlets. The location of Oyster vendors was last reviewed in 2008 and showed that 96% of Londoners lived within 400m of an Oyster outlet.

It was noted that London TravelWatch and Transport for London might collaborate more closely on research work in future.

It was noted that roadside ticket vending machines for buses were being taken out of service in areas outside central London and the Director, Policy & Investigation, suggested that those within central London Pay Before You Board area should be reviewed also. Mr Verma said that this was under consideration.

Mr Verma agreed to report back to London TravelWatch on the issues of TfL's relationship with fixmytransport.com and the use of the data protection act to prevent to swapping of data between TfL and London TravelWatch in order to investigate complaints.

Action: Executive Assistant

9 Research on London Underground ticket office staffing (LTW396)

The Director, Policy & Investigation, presented London TravelWatch's research into staffing arrangements at London Underground ticket offices following reorganisation in February 2011.

It was noted that the main part of the work focused on whether staff were available on ticket gatelines when the ticket offices were closed and that the definition of 'gateline' was broad, including the whole area visible from the ticket barriers.

The findings of the research showed that, depending on the time of the week of the survey, at between 43 and 48% of station visits there were no staff members visible from the gateline.

The report called for better information for passengers at ticket offices including more training for staff on responding to their enquiries and more detailed information about train departures. It also sought more visibility for staff in stations when ticket offices were closed.

Shashi Verma said that Transport for London carried out around 6,000 'mystery' station visits per month to check issues such as staffing arrangements and that London TravelWatch's findings were at significant variance to its own.

However, there were some aspects to the report that TfL would acknowledge, for example that staff training could be improved. In addition, TfL was facing a period of

staff shortages and so there were currently gaps in the staff complement, although that would not necessarily explain the extent of the report's findings.

Mr Verma noted that it could be possible to provide more information at those stations without live train departure boards about where to look online for departure information.

It was agreed that some elements of the report would be reworded in light of the discussion and that London TravelWatch and London Underground should discuss the findings further after the meeting.

Action: Director, Policy & Investigation

10 Railway command paper

The Director, Policy & Investigation, gave brief a presentation on likely content of the forthcoming railway command paper. It was noted that London TravelWatch would have the opportunity to put forward its views during the consultation phase, particularly in respect of the localism aspects and the ability of the Mayor of London to influence services.

11 High Speed 2

The Director, Policy & Investigation, gave brief a presentation on the implications arising from the decision to go forward with the High Speed 2 rail link. Members noted that the construction period would be lengthy and disruptive, particularly around Euston and on the Northern and Victoria lines.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch should write to the Department for Transport setting out its concerns and should also consider working with boroughs and the London Assembly.

Action: Director, Policy & Investigation

12 Transport for London performance report Q2 2011-12 (LTW397)

The Policy Officer presented London TravelWatch's report on TfL's performance for the second quarter of 2011-12. He said that the report now included more long-term data to show trends over a longer period.

The improving position in respect of bus stop accessibility was noted, as was the good status across most of TfL, with the exception of streets.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch should consider circulating the performance report to London Assembly members and also, possibly, Members of Parliament.

Action: Policy Officer

13 Appointment of subsidiary bodies and terms of reference (LTW398)

The report proposing the appointment of subsidiary bodies and terms of reference was agreed.

14 London TravelWatch staffing reorganisation

The Chief Executive reported that London TravelWatch had recently completed a comprehensive internal reorganisation, reducing the staffing complement from 23 to 16 full time equivalent posts. There had been the loss of some posts at senior level and a budget reduction of 30% compared to the base budget of 2009-10. The organisation had covered the costs of the reorganisation itself and all the redundancies had been voluntary. London TravelWatch was now seeking to focus on its core activities of casework and policy and was accommodating its reduced budget through new ways of working.

The report was noted.

15 Any other business

There was no other business.

16 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.

The next meeting of the full Board will be held on 27 March 2012.