
Minutes

Agenda item: 5
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Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 29 May 2012 at London TravelWatch

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Present

Members

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

Guests

Peter Hendy Commissioner for Transport, Transport for London

Stakeholder Representatives

Helen Deakin Stakeholder Engagement, Transport for London

Lianna Etkind Campaigns Co-ordinator, Transport for All

Local transport users

Secretariat

Gytha Chinweze Policy Officer (Item 8)

Tim Bellenger Director, Policy and Investigation

Janet Cooke Chief Executive

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 pre-meeting 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 on a meeting she and the Chief Executive attended with three Managing Directors (MDs) at Transport for London (TfL). This was a new format which London TravelWatch had agreed to pilot, and the first meeting had proved useful. It had been possible to cover many issues, particularly preparation for the Olympics and the introduction of Oyster and ITSO.

The Chief Executive said that having the three MDs in the same meeting had enabled London TravelWatch to get agreement on issues it had been pursuing for some time, such as the release of data about complaints.

The Chair reported on the result of the London elections and the composition of the Assembly's new Transport Committee. She and the Chief Executive had attended a reception for Assembly members shortly after the election and it had been a useful opportunity for discussion with them and with other stakeholders.

The new Deputy Mayor for Transport was Isabel Dedring and the Chair hoped to be able to organise a meeting with her.

The Chair also drew attention to a recent report from the Rail Accident and Investigation Board. The report investigated a potentially serious incident one year ago on a First Capital Connect train between St Pancras and Kentish Town. The report identified a number of faults in relation to FCC's preparedness for incidents and these led to passengers alighting the train directly onto the tracks. Many of the problems highlighted in the report had been addressed by FCC by the time the report was published.

London TravelWatch's Safety and Policy Officer would be working with the Office of Rail Regulation in following up the recommendations in the report.

The Deputy Chair reported that Passenger Focus was currently focusing on concerns over tickets and penalty fares. It was also working on the Department for Transport's consultation on fares and ticketing and had formally put into abeyance proposals to work more closely with London TravelWatch.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27 March 2012 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The minutes of the Governance Committee of 27 March 2012 were noted.

6 Matters arising (LTW403)

6.1 Publishing of Transport for London complaints data

It was noted that London TravelWatch had been seeking TfL's complaints data since July 2010. The Director, Policy and Investigation, reported that TfL had agreed that London TravelWatch could see the end-of-year data before it went to the TfL Board on the basis that it would be treated confidentially until formally published.

6.2 Slips and trips on the TfL road and pavement network

It was noted that the issue of whether TfL issued reference numbers for complaints was separate to that of London TravelWatch putting information about redress on its website and the actions should be separated on the Matters Arising report.

Action: Executive Assistant

6.3 Data Protection Act and fixmytransport.com

It was noted that these issues were also separate and should be referred back to the Consumer Affairs committee.

Action: Executive Assistant

7 Actions taken (LTW404)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, reported on a visit to West Ham to view preparations for the Olympics, which appeared to be progressing well. C2C had been concerned for some time about West Ham being adequate to cope with the overflow of passengers if Stratford were out of action but detailed plans had been put in place to manage passengers at busy times.

The Chief Executive said that the meeting with the new Chief Executive of the Office of Rail Regulation had been very useful with detailed sharing of workplans and London TravelWatch able to raise its concerns about under-reporting of passenger numbers in London.

8 Presentation of the Transport Commissioner for London

Peter Hendy updated members on TfL's Business plan for 2013/14 and 2014/15. These had been revised since the Comprehensive Spending Review and led to a reduction of about £2 billion in the budget. He reported that overall delivery had been good last year with an historical performance for buses and the tube.

TfL anticipated a lot of activity and disruption in the weeks ahead and would be redoubling its efforts to produce a reliable service. Key areas to be focused on included the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Its principal activities would be getting information to businesses and individuals about planning their journey during the Games. Work was continuing with the freight and transport industry about how the Olympics would impact them. Also, 3,000 back office TfL staff would be deployed to assist the public during the Games and they would have access to real-time information.

Peter Hendy said he was excited about the Olympics not least because of the capital investment that this generated, and said that TfL would continue to engage with the public about avoiding busy areas of the network. He added that the lessons learned from working flexibly during the Olympics would be a great legacy for London. He explained, for instance, that experiments on night time delivery to free up road space in the day, if continued beyond the Games period, could become a real permanent legacy benefit.

TfL would contribute to the Mayor's London 2020 transport plan and would set up the case for London and argue for a coherent transport investment plan. He informed members that there would be an opportunity for consultation and was pleased about London TravelWatch's intent to engage with this.

The Chair thanked Peter Hendy for his presentation and expressed particular interest in the legacy arguments for the Games and asked to be involved in the post-Games discussions London TravelWatch would have about the benefits that had accrued to passengers.

Peter Hendy responded to a number of questions as follows:

- **Accessibility**

In response to questions on disability access at the Paralympic Games; the number of stations with high footfall included in the accessibility upgrade programme; the fact that investment in step-free access had been frozen; the case for investing in small-scale projects at smaller stations and whether there could be better joining up between TfL and the highway authorities to make the streets around the stations more accessible, Peter Hendy responded that though not perfect, London was better than the rest of the country in terms of accessibility.

He explained that the Department for Transport Access for All fund had been directed only to railway stations on the National Rail network and was not available for London Underground because they had separate funding. He added that the programme at TfL included both small and large-scale programmes. For example, the proposal at Bank station would cost £4-6million and include level access. The step-free programme had been frozen reluctantly as a consequence of the spending review because the overall budget had been substantially reduced.

He agreed that certain work would be desirable, for instance at Harrow-on-the-Hill and Baker Street, however money was also required to tackle Victoria, Bank and King Cross stations and there were hard choices to be made.

Peter Hendy explained that the boroughs received funding in a bidding process to cover a wide range of schemes and generally that it was the borough's choice to carry out schemes on their road network outside stations, which included keeping footways clear of obstructions, though he recognised that there needed to be a collective effort of will on all parties to work together.

- **Cycling**

In response to a question about the conflict between cyclists and road users and the danger caused by poorly designed roads and aggressive driving, Peter Hendy said that there had been significant political discussions over cycling and work was underway to review the Cycle Superhighways on the TRLN. He said that the Mayor had committed to increasing the numbers of cyclists on roads and that a range of factors needed to be considered including highway design and road user behaviour in general, not just of cyclists. He added that there was a programme in place for educating road users about cycling and HGV driver training was also progressing to address this issue. Also, road safety plan had been drafted and would be published soon.

- **Jubilee Line**

In response to a question on recent service disruption on the Jubilee Line and whether he was confident that breakdowns would be handled properly, Peter Hendy responded that London had the largest and the oldest railway system in the world yet was generally reliable. Plans for the Olympics would maximise the reliability of the transport system and huge steps would be taken to get athletes and officials to the Games. He cautioned that this would not mean that things would not go wrong, but London's transport system had coped successfully with the riots and the events of 7 July and he was reasonably confident that it would also cope with the Olympics. He explained that there were now 30 trains per hour on the Jubilee Line and TfL was redoubling its efforts during times of breakdown to increase communication with passengers. It had started 'Twitter' feeds to people travelling on trains and Wi-Fi was now available in some stations so information could be provided to passengers when things went wrong. Passengers were also being encouraged to use the published TfL information which gave information, for instance, on hotspots to avoid, to plan their journey.

- **Olympic Route Network**

Peter Hendy said that London had the best taxi service in the world and that taxis would continue to operate during the Olympics. Every taxi driver would be issued with a booklet before the Games which would include information on the Olympic Route Network.

- **Diamond Jubilee**

Peter Hendy confirmed that there would be no engineering works on the system during the Jubilee.

- **Barking to Gospel Oak line**

Peter Hendy said that there was no funding at present for electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak line.

- **Future franchise arrangements**

In response to a question about whether, when more of the overground network comes under the control of the Mayor in the future under proposed franchise arrangement, there were plans to improve services and whether more could be done for instance for the evening and Sunday services on the Victoria-Dartford via Peckam Rye corridor; Peter Hendy said that the revenue that accrued from the franchise arrangements would go to the operator and not to TfL. Arrangements and improvements needed to be made but this must be done through advocacy, in partnership with others.

The Chair thanked Peter Hendy for his presentation and for the huge efforts his team was making for the Olympics, and wished TfL every success during the games period. She also congratulated him on the new walking maps recently produced by TfL which she was sure would be of great help to pedestrians during and beyond the games.

9 Mystery shopping for accessibility of Olympic stations (LTW405)

The Policy Officer reported on research carried out jointly between London TravelWatch and Transport for All on the accessibility of stations serving Olympic venues. Visits were made to all Olympic venue stations advertised as step-free with volunteers including a wheelchair user and people with visual impairment.

All the stations were accessible from street to platform and works were planned or underway to ensure full accessibility onto the train. All the bus journeys were successful, with drivers pulling into the kerb and properly operating the ramps.

It would have been useful for more tactile paving to be installed and the area around some stations was not ideal for those with disabilities. However, on the whole, the situation was very positive in accessibility terms.

Lianna Etkind of Transport for All said that she was delighted to have worked in partnership with London TravelWatch on this research. Many of the problems likely to be encountered by older or disabled passengers such as crowding, queues, the cost of taxis and so on, were not in the control of TfL. However, it would be positive if the Olympic-related initiatives such as rapid-response lift engineering and platform ramps could be continued beyond the Games period.

It was agreed that the TfL map showing train and platform accessibility was welcome and should be widely promoted.

The Chair thanked officers and Transport for All for their work in producing the report.

10 Ealing Broadway-Wandsworth Road closure

The Director, Policy and Investigation, reported that the DfT was proposing to close the bus and train service between Ealing Broadway and Wandsworth Road. This was a different process to that underway for the proposed closure of Watford underground station as this was national rail and not TfL. There had been extensive coverage of the proposals in the rail press and to date one objection had been received.

London TravelWatch had contacted people who had responded when the original cross country service had been withdrawn. At the end of the consultation process in mid-August, the DfT would pass representations to London TravelWatch for its consideration.

11 Passenger engagement event in Tooting (LTW406)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, reported on the findings of the survey carried out during the recent passenger engagement event in Tooting. The event had a slightly different format to previous ones as it took place on a Saturday and was held in and around an underground station. Officers were able to speak to many passengers and there were many concerns about the high cost of transport and problems with accessibility.

Caseworkers noted that many people were happy with their transport service and raised no complaints.

The Chief Executive noted that many of the issues raised by passengers chimed with the areas covered by London TravelWatch's passenger priorities document and that passenger engagement events were useful ways of adding to London TravelWatch's evidence base.

However, it was felt that more work could be done to obtain more qualitative information in the course of these events, and it was suggested that in future the questionnaire could be amended to include more open-ended questions such as to name the three best or worst things about their journey.

12 Any other business

There was no other business.

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.

The next meeting of the full Board will be held on 24 July 2012.