
Minutes

Agenda item 5
Drafted 02.02.11

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 1 February 2011
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 on 9 November 2010**
- 6 Matters arising (LTW 369)**
- 7 Actions taken (LTW 370)**
- 8 Impact of recent adverse weather conditions on transport in London (LTW 371)**
- 9 West Midlands and Chilterns Draft Rail Utilisation Strategy (LTW 372)**
- 10 Changes to London TravelWatch's governance structure (LTW 373)**
- 11 Appointment of subsidiary bodies and Deputy Chair (LTW 374)**
- 12 Update on Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvement in London**
- 13 Any other business**
- 14 Resolution to move into confidential session**

Present

Members

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

Guests

Clare Kavanagh Director of Performance, TfL London Buses (Item 12)

Stakeholder Representatives

Matt Winfield Stakeholder Engagement Manager, TfL

Local transport users

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger Director, Research and Development, London TravelWatch
Gytha Chinweze Executive Assistant, London TravelWatch (Items 1-11)
Janet Cooke Chief Executive, London TravelWatch
Sharon Malley Senior Committee Administrator, London TravelWatch
Vincent Stops Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer (Item 12)
Poonam Tamana Policy Officer (Item 9)

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

No apologies for absence were received.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest. Members were reminded to update their standing declarations if they had not done so already.

4 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

The Chair reported that a lot of work had been continuing on the London TravelWatch internal review and restructuring process. She also confirmed that two meetings had taken place with representatives of the London Assembly about the implementation of the Assembly's review of London TravelWatch.

David Leibling gave an update on Passenger Focus. At its last two meetings Passenger Focus had considered various matters including the passenger link manager reports, the McNulty report, the impact of recent snow conditions and overcrowding. In addition the Autumn National Passenger Survey was published, showing good results for London Overground, with passengers now seeing the benefits of the investment in that route. The National Passenger Survey was now broken down by route rather than simply by operator.

Representatives from Passenger Focus had held a meeting with the Secretary of State about the future of the organisation and an internal reorganisation and cost cutting measures were currently being progressed.

Members discussed the problem of comparing findings from the National Passenger Survey with Transport for London's satisfaction surveys. There had also been some concern about the sampling method of the National Passenger Survey given that it appeared to focus its sampling on long-distance commuters arriving at major London terminals rather than passengers travelling to and from smaller London commuter stations. It was agreed that this issue should be flagged for consideration at a future Transport Services committee.

Action: Committee services

5 Minutes

For administrative reasons, the minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2010 were withdrawn and would be presented to the next meeting for consideration.

6 Matters arising (LTW 369)

It was noted that the actions in the Matters arising paper were not numbered and that they should be numbered in future.

6.1 Bus surgeries

Surgeries were being planned in Kingston and Newham for Spring and dates would be circulated shortly.

6.2 Access to healthcare

The Chair confirmed that she continued to press this issue during discussions with the Assembly and noted that London TravelWatch had been invited to contribute to the Assembly's forward agenda planning programme beginning in March/April and that access to healthcare would form part of those discussions.

It was agreed that the Chair would write again to the Mayor of London to emphasise the importance of ensuring transport access to healthcare. It was also agreed that the Chair would write to the Minister of Transport, with a copy to the Minister for Health, on access to healthcare in light of healthcare restructuring, seeking a meeting with both departments together.

Action: Chair

6.3 Complaints data

Matt Winfield of Transport for London updated members on the publication of TfL's complaints data. He stated that he would be co-ordinating the collection of data from across TfL and ensuring that it was consistently presented so that it could be properly compared. The first period of data to be subject to this new reporting would be that beginning mid-November 2010 and it should be available for London TravelWatch to view confidentially in April and made available publicly in June.

6.4 Concessionary fares scheme for those on Job Seekers Allowance

The Chair agreed to contact former member Daniel Francis to enquire whether he had had the opportunity to assist with the submission of a Parliamentary question on the subject of take-up of the JSA concessionary fares scheme. It was noted that the Director, Research & Development, had provided some suitable wording.

Action: Chair

Members considered whether the variance in take-up across the London boroughs showed that some local initiatives were being undertaken in some areas to improve take-up.

Matt Winfield reported that the scheme was promoted in the most cost-effective way, through direct contact with people applying for benefits.

It was agreed that the Chair would write to London Councils to request greater promotion of the scheme and to the Citizens Advice Bureaux to request that literature on the scheme be made available at their offices.

6.5 London Bridge

It was agreed that in advance of a future discussion at a Board meeting, members would visit London Bridge as a group, along with the Director, Research & Development, who would provide a briefing note beforehand. The visit would take place on 22 February 2011. Further information would be circulated in due course.

Action: Committee services

7 Actions taken (LTW 370)

It was agreed that the Actions taken paper would be sorted alphabetically by borough in future.

It was noted that officers had responded to 19% of consultations in this period.

It was agreed that the Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer would contact David Brown's office for a response in relation to the issue of motorcycles in bus lanes.

Action: Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

8 Impact of recent adverse weather conditions on transport in London (LTW 371)

The Director, Research & Development, presented his paper on the impact of recent snow on London transport.

He stated that the report had been compiled using information from staff, members and casework, as well as direct conversations with operators and authorities throughout the period of disruption. London TravelWatch had been proactive in contributing to David Quarmby's Winter Resilience Review, the successor to his previous Winter Report, and many of London TravelWatch's comments had found their way into the Review's recommendations.

The Director, Research & Development, reported that the National Rail Train Planning System (TPS) fed information to all electronic systems for operators and consumer websites. However, because of its size, amendments to the TPS had to be made by 5.00 pm the day before they took effect, which was not possible when the operators were responding to emergency situations. This resulted on this occasion in the TPS crashing and being unable to provide information about emergency timetables even to staff at stations, let alone to consumers via websites or phone services. London TravelWatch had recommended the development of a back-up system for the provision of basic information to operators and consumers in emergency situations that did not rely on the TPS, and this recommendation was adopted in the Review's conclusions.

The Chief Executive reported on discussions she had held with the British Transport Police (BTP) on problems resulting from overcrowding. The police had concerns that should overcrowded trains break down in extreme conditions passengers would be more likely to detrain, which would be dangerous. They also had concerns about

queue management at stations where large numbers of passengers were trying to board a limited number of trains. The Chief Executive recommended discussions on these subjects should take place between the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), National Rail and the BTP.

The Chief Executive noted that this was the first time a train had been stuck overnight in London TravelWatch's region and this emphasised the importance of operators establishing links with local authorities in the areas served by their routes to ensure such situations were handled properly. It might be appropriate for this to form part of local authorities' emergency planning procedures.

Members noted that the position on booked seats during periods of disruption varied between operators and that it was not always immediately apparent what passengers with a seat booked on a particular train should do.

It was noted that some progress had been made since last winter, for example salt allocation was much better than last year and local authorities had heeded the advice to publish a 'snow code' advising residents on how to clear their own driveways and footpaths outside their properties.

It was noted that compensation arrangements for passengers who had experienced disruption varied according to which operator they were travelling with. It would be preferable, when a national event occurred, to introduce a national compensation scheme. This issue would be picked up in the work being undertaken in the Consumer Affairs committee and would inform London TravelWatch's general position on franchise arrangements.

The Director, Research & Development, reported that just as in the recent past operators had formed an industry-wide working group on leaf fall problems, a similar group was being proposed to consider solutions to the problems of the third rail system, which had been a significant contributor to problems with train reliability during the snow.

It was agreed that the conclusions of the report be taken up at the appropriate levels with service providers and authorities.

Action: Director, Research & Development

It was agreed that members would send their appreciation to managers and staff at Transport for London for their success in keeping their network moving during the snow.

Action: Chair

9 Response to consultation on the draft West Midlands and Chilterns Route Utilisation Strategy

The Director, Research & Development, presented his paper on London TravelWatch's response to the consultation on the draft West Midlands and Chilterns Route Utilisation Strategy. He explained that Annex A was London TravelWatch's formal response to the Network Rail's consultation document, and Annex B was a broader document that set out London TravelWatch's wider vision of how services in this area could be improved.

The Director, Research & Development, emphasised that a substantial part of the route under discussion was within the London TravelWatch area but that the majority of the consultation document was concerned only with the West Midlands area. This was despite the fact that the London-end services were very poor, with some stations served at peak hours only or with very low frequencies, such as might be expected in an area of low population rather than a metro area.

There had been considerable investment in the line but it had all favoured long distance commuters. Local user groups and Members of Parliament had been lobbying for some time for improvements to London-end local services and, as the RUS set the strategy for the next 20 to 30 years, it was critical that this issue be addressed.

It was noted that the journey time from Ayelsbury to Marylebone, a distance of 38 miles, took 60 minutes and there was no alternative rail route. It was also noted that Marylebone itself was not well connected compared with other London termini and it may be possible to improve interchange on the line by adding platforms at West Hampstead station and moving the interchange between the Jubilee and Metropolitan lines to West Hampstead instead of Finchley Road as currently. This would require a significant investment, probably via a developer. It was noted London TravelWatch was well placed to support such a brief as it was not subject to the same local pressures as other local decision-makers.

Members discussed the poor services at three small stations, Northolt Park Road, Sudbury Hill Harrow and Sudbury & Harrow Road, and noted that alternative underground and bus routes served the area relatively well. It was also noted that it was difficult to generate the levels of traffic that user groups wanted to ensure better service in future. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to consider closing these stations altogether and releasing the additional capacity to serve larger stations further along the line such as High Wycombe and Gerrards Cross. This would require an amendment to the report as presented to members.

Action: Director, Research & Development

It was agreed that London TravelWatch would offer to present its findings on the West Midlands and Chilterns Draft RUS to Assembly members. It was also agreed that it would be useful for London TravelWatch to facilitate a meeting between Network Rail, Chiltern Railways and Transport for London to discuss the issues raised in the RUS.

Action: Director, Research & Development

It was agreed that this was an excellent example of the value that London TravelWatch could have in putting forward the needs of Londoners in national debate.

In response to points raised by the public, members discussed the possibility of releasing capacity from the Crossrail route and others in the area to increase capacity on the Chiltern line.

10 Changes to London TravelWatch's governance structure (LTW 373)

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee had agreed to make several changes to the way London TravelWatch was organised. The four existing committees would merge into two, with Consumer Affairs and Fares & Ticketing merging into a new Consumer Affairs committee and Transport Services and Access to Transport merging into a new Transport Services committee. There would also be changes to the Executive Group, which would be replaced by the Governance committee and whose meetings would coincide with Board meetings and Board briefings. All members would sit on all committees, including the Governance committee.

These changes were agreed, and the terms of reference for the new committees, along with future meeting dates, were outlined in the report, which was agreed.

11 Appointment of subsidiary bodies and Deputy Chair (LTW 374)

The Chair reported that the Assembly had agreed to advertise to fill the vacancy left by Onjali Rauf's resignation, which would bring the Board up to a normal working level of six members plus the Chair.

The Chair noted that all current members' terms expired at the same time and this would, in future, pose a problem of continuity. This would need to be addressed once the Assembly Review implementation plan was clearer.

It was agreed that David Barry would Chair the new Consumer Affairs committee with David Leibling the Deputy Chair. It was agreed that Gail Engert would Chair the new Transport Services committee with Sophia Lambert the Deputy Chair.

It was agreed that members would nominate David Leibling as Deputy Chair of the Board, for the Assembly's ratification.

12 Update on Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvement in London

Clare Kavanagh, Director of Performance at TfL London Buses, gave a presentation to members on passenger priorities in London. The presentation highlighted what TfL was doing to address the findings of London TravelWatch's earlier report Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvements in London.

She reported that TfL carried out an annual survey of customer satisfaction and that research about passenger priorities across the country showed that passengers often wanted very similar things with some small local nuances. The most important factor in London and across the UK was overall journey time. In London, operators were contractually incentivised to improve reliability.

Ms Kavanagh reported on the implementation of iBus on all buses, giving passengers information about the route number, destination and next stop.

She reported that although only 50% of bus stops met all the criteria for full accessibility, wheelchair users could actually board buses at over 95% of stops and TfL would continue to press for increased accessibility.

Ms Kavanagh noted that TfL rated improving environmental performance as a priority although it was not identified specifically by passenger and TfL hoped to have 300 hybrid buses in total by the end of 2012.

On customer service and driver behaviour, Ms Kavanagh reported that drivers were fully trained and refresher trained every year on dealing with situations that might arise on their buses. The Big Red Book was issued to all drivers with information on issues such as acting professionally, assisting wheelchair passengers and handling large groups of young people.

Ms Kavanagh reported that the location for the 2,500 new Countdown II signs had now been finalised. Colleagues would be briefing London TravelWatch officers on this shortly. This clearly left many bus stops without Countdown information and so other ways of informing passengers about real-time services were being developed. Passengers would in future be able to get the relevant Countdown information via standard-rate text or by web services.

Ms Kavanagh concluded by confirming that there had been a positive commitment to various concessionary fares for the elderly, disabled people and children.

The Chair thanked Ms Kavanagh for her comprehensive presentation and invited questions from members. Members raised issues including details around iBus, London boroughs' commitment to bus priority, consistency of bus stop names on Journey Planner, bus destination blinds and CCTV on buses.

She confirmed that she had information about congestion hotspots and would share this information with London TravelWatch so that it could target its lobbying most effectively.

Ms Kavanagh confirmed that there were now 20% fewer buses using Oxford Street. However, as capacity was released through bus removal, taxis would move into the street to take their place. In her view, the problem on Oxford Street was not buses but the large number of taxis and other vehicles that were able to cross it or use sections of it.

Ms Kavanagh agreed to look again at the possibility of including information within the bus itself about the whole route in a format that could be easily changed if the bus were transferred to a different route.

Ms Kavanagh reported that intelligent driver monitoring was producing good results, for example in conserving fuel and, anecdotally, fewer accidents.

On the New Bus for London, Ms Kavanagh confirmed that the initial design had not been ideal for wheelchair users but that modified designs were now in place, with some poles moved to new positions, and that wheelchair access was now much easier.

Ms Kavanagh confirmed that if passengers had experienced difficulties with a service it should be possible to identify which bus and driver was responsible as long as passengers could state when and where they boarded.

Members thanked Ms Kavanagh for her responses to their questions and her informative presentation.

13 Any other business

The Director, Research & Development, responded that he proposed to commission research on incomplete journeys on Oyster Pay as You Go. TfL's figures showed that around 200,000 journeys per month were not successfully completed, with National Rail accounting for twice as many incomplete journeys as TfL. The purpose of the research was to find out why journeys were not completed and to find out how this could be addressed. The Director, Research & Development, had approached both TfL and ATOC for possible funding contributions, but it was important for London TravelWatch to lead on this. It was agreed that the research should be commissioned and the Director, Research & Development, would keep the Chair informed of the funding position.

Action: Director, Research & Development

14 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 discussed the London Assembly review of London TravelWatch and reviewed the meeting.

The next meeting of the full Board will be held on 22 March 2011.