
Minutes

Agenda item 5
Drafted 14.02.11

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 November 2010
at City Hall**

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Present

Members

David Barry, Terry Bennett, Kevin Davis, Gail Engert, Daniel Francis, Sharon Grant (Chair), Sophia Lambert, David Leibling, Sarah Pond, Onjali Rauf (from Item 5), Lorna Reith (Deputy Chair)

Guests

Valerie Shawcross AM	Chair of Transport Committee, London Assembly
Mark Roberts	Executive Director of Secretariat
Tom Burton-Page	Head of Group Business Planning, Transport for London
Mike Goggin	Director of Stations, Network Rail
Surendra Wanz	Senior Programme Manager, Transport for London Surface Transport
Andy Clarke	Programme Manager, Transport for London Surface Transport
Emma Hebb	Consultation Engagement Manager, Transport for London Surface Transport

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
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive, London TravelWatch
Mark Donoghue	Committee Administrator, London TravelWatch
Sharon Malley	Senior Committee Administrator, London TravelWatch

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members, officers and guests to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for lateness were received from Onjali Rauf and for absence from Teena Lashmore.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

4 Response to the London Assembly review

The Chair introduced Valerie Shawcross AM, Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee, and Mark Roberts, Executive Director of the Secretariat, to the meeting.

Ms Shawcross reported that the London Assembly had accepted as policy a report reviewing the role of London TravelWatch. She was tasked her with implementing its recommendations, although changing the legal status of London TravelWatch would require legislation and this was the responsibility of Government. In the meantime, she intended to implement the remaining recommendations as far as she was able.

She stated that she hoped to develop an interim model for London TravelWatch and that she wanted to do so in co-operation with the organisation. Once this model had been developed she intended to conduct full and open consultation on the proposals with stakeholders. Unless the law was changed, London TravelWatch would need to continue to fulfil its statutory legal obligations.

Ms Shawcross noted that the thrust of the proposals in relation to London TravelWatch was rooted in the need to reduce costs, and to avoid duplication between it and the London Assembly. Co-location and the possibility of sharing back office and accommodation costs were suggested in the report. However, Ms Shawcross indicated that the Assembly may be sympathetic to other proposals that clearly demonstrated financial efficiency even if they had not been specifically referred to in the initial report.

Members questioned Ms Shawcross on the implementation proposals. The Chair noted that passengers needed to be properly represented and that there was a clear role of presenting the consumer perspective for an organisation such as London TravelWatch. David Leibling stated that the government had accepted the need for

Passenger Focus to remain as an independent voice for the passenger nationally and thought this applied equally to London TravelWatch, as London's interests needed to be represented and in terms of integration passenger representation needed to avoid confusion with political or business interests. David Barry added that political representatives (such as London Assembly members) had a wide range of interests to represent, while an independent body such as London TravelWatch could maintain focus entirely on passengers.

Terry Bennett stressed the importance of consultation on London TravelWatch's future and noted that the proposals as set would leave the Board with no members living in South London after 1 January 2011. He also noted that some Board members reside outside the Greater London Authority boundary and their experience helped them understand those passengers who travel into London.

Sarah Pond stated that it was important that there continued to be integrated passenger representation to prevent issues from falling between different organisations and being lost.

Valerie Shawcross stated that many issues had already been debated and finalised during the review process and that her role now was implementation of those decisions. To address the specific issue of impartiality in dealing with complaints, she would consider setting up a customer unit supported by a customer panel that sat alongside the London Assembly, with the Transport Committee of the Assembly being responsible for following up policy issues that arose from complaints.

In relation to the make-up of the Board, Ms Shawcross stated that while a Board or Panel may be maintained, it would be strategic in nature rather than representative of specific areas or modes. She believed it was important to agree what the body should do, and how it should do it, before deciding the minimum or maximum size of the Board. The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring the Board remained at a workable size.

Daniel Francis stated that a large proportion of London TravelWatch's work was Oyster related, even in areas where there was a large Network Rail presence. This led to a concern that splitting Network Rail away from Transport for London activities could be problematic for passengers.

Mark Roberts reported that further consideration could be given to the exact division of activities between the Assembly and Passenger Focus. Ms Shawcross reiterated that the primary focus of the review was cost reduction and that she was seeking proposals that avoided duplication of work and resulted in reduced costs.

Ms Shawcross stated that she was aware that a considerable volume of work had been carried out in anticipation of the review and that even before that the organisation had made significant progress. However, with the sea change in public spending across the board, more still needed to be achieved.

Gail Engert welcomed the commitment to further stakeholder consultation and asked how that would be carried out. Ms Shawcross stated that she was considering putting together a steering group comprising individuals from London TravelWatch and the Assembly that would discuss ideas and come up with a firm proposal, which would then be put out to consultation with stakeholders.

The Chair finally emphasised the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding as discussions about role took place. The relationship between London TravelWatch and the London Assembly was set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and it was important that both parties continued to work within that framework.

The Chair thanked Ms Shawcross for attending the meeting and responding to members' questions and said she looked forward to discussing these issues further with her.

5 Update on Transport for London funding allocation

Tom Burton-Page, Head of Group Business Planning at Transport for London, gave a presentation to members on the outcome of the comprehensive spending review in relation to Transport for London. Following the presentation he answered questions from members.

He confirmed that approximately one-third of TfL's income was from fares, one-third from the Department for Transport and one-third from capital grants. He stated that although having a high inflation figure allowed TfL to set higher fares (RPI + 2%), overall it was a net cost to the organisation as it also linked to higher wages and other costs.

The Chair questioned Mr Burton-Page on the impact that withdrawing some paper tickets would have on certain types of passengers, particularly those who travelled into London infrequently or those on fixed low incomes. There was a concern that some very large individual rises were masked within the overall average increase. It was suggested that if, in future, paper tickets would represent extremely bad value for money they should eventually be phased out.

Members discussed the Job Seekers Allowance concessionary fares scheme, which was introduced to assist people on low fixed incomes meet travel costs. There was concern among members that take-up rates of that scheme was lower than anticipated and uncertainty about whether there was adequate promotion for potential applicants at Jobcentre Pluses.

Members questioned the meaning of the Mayor's commitment to bus 'network protection'. Mr Burton-Page stated that bus mileage would be maintained as set out in the business plan.

The Chair raised concerns that the internal reorganisation at TfL might mean a reduction in the number of staff able to carry out the stakeholder liaison function, which would have a detrimental effect on London TravelWatch's ability to perform its duties. Mr Burton-Page said that the internal review was still at an early stage and its outcomes were geared closely to the spending review.

6 Launch of Station Standards report (LTW 366)

The Director, Research & Development, presented London TravelWatch's report on station standards, setting out a set of principles allowing the monitoring of stations in future as viewed by passengers.

7 Network Rail response to London TravelWatch's Station Standards report

Mike Goggin, Director of Stations at Network Rail, gave a presentation to members on Network Rail's response to the Station Standards report. Following the presentation he answered questions.

Members asked how decisions were reached on the retail mix on station concourses. Mr Goggin stated that Network Rail had an incentive to maximise use of the retail space as it shared revenue with the retailers. It therefore appointed retail consultants to advise on the best retail offer at stations. He noted that there was increasingly less catering on trains and therefore it was important that passengers were able to purchase convenience foods at stations in advance of their journeys.

Members questioned Network Rail's apparent policy of prioritising a small number of major refurbishment projects over investing smaller amounts in many stations to ensure that all stations had, for example, adequate toilet provision, enough seating, litter bins and clear signage.

Mr Goggin stated that Network Rail was directly responsible for 18 large stations and was landlord at the remaining 2,500 stations. Where it was directly responsible it took those smaller issues very seriously and had just completed a project on wayfinding to bring signage back within a consistent framework. He did note, however, that in relation to seating there was an inbuilt conflict between providing seats and enabling passengers to walk through the station.

In relation to the stations where Network Rail was landlord it had less control over the detailed aspects. It was responsible for maintaining the infrastructure and was not permitted to improve it unless required by government to do so. Network Rail was arguing in favour of having greater control over stations in future.

In response to a question, Mr Goggin confirmed that current step-free access requirements were only from station entry to platform, not from platform to train.

Mr Goggin reported that investment in stations such as Clapham Junction was harder to secure because the financial case was less obvious. He said that more work was needed on recognising the commercial value of stations as a whole.

It was agreed that it would be useful to develop a programme of action for taking forward the findings of the Station Standards report.

Action: Director, Research & Development

8 Update on upgrade works in and around London Bridge station (LTW 367)

The Director, Research & Development, presented London TravelWatch's report on the importance of London Bridge as a major interchange station, setting out the context for a range of upgrade activities affecting the Thameslink service and the bus station.

Surendra Wanz, Senior Programme Manager for Transport for London Surface Transport, gave a presentation on changes to the bus station at London Bridge. He

then answered questions from members, accompanied by Andy Clarke, Programme Manager, and Emma Hebb, Consultation Engagement Manager.

Mr Wanz acknowledged that there would be some displacement of buses during the construction works but that they had sought to displace the least busy routes. A good deal of time has been spent working out the best way to phase the programme to minimise disruption, but some would be inevitable.

Ms Hebb stated that three routes would be diverted out of the bus station for the seven-month duration of the works and, for those routes, the alighting points would remain fixed. For those routes that continued to use the bus station during the works there would be a series of short phases with changes to the alighting points at each phase.

It was agreed that signage and passenger assistance would be very important during the construction phase and Ms Hebb stated that she had been working with Network Rail and Transport for London on how to brief staff.

It was agreed that it would be useful for members to visit the London Bridge bus station and Network Rail station on a future occasion, perhaps as part of the next Board meeting.

Action: Committee Services

9 Chair's activities and Passenger Focus update

9.1 Chair's activities

The Chair reported that the Paul Kasozi Award for Staff Excellence had been won by two individuals, David Rose and Mark Donoghue, for taking on activities additional to their agreed roles and completing them well. The Board congratulated both David and Mark.

9.2 Passenger Focus update

David Leibling reported that there had been no meetings of the Passenger Focus board since the last London TravelWatch board meeting, the October meeting having been cancelled. He said that Passenger Focus members remained uncertain about the outcome of the comprehensive spending review and the impact that will have on their work.

The Chair reported that she had been keeping in touch with the Passenger Focus Chair, and confirmed that current uncertainties may slow down the exploration of partnership working between the two organisations.

10 Minutes

10.1 Corrections

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 28 September 2010 were agreed subject to the following corrections:

- On page 3, minute 5.2, the reference to Theresa Pearce MP should be amended to Teresa Pearce MP
- On page 4, minute 6, the reference to concessionary fares scheme should be clarified to show it referred to the Jobseekers Allowance scheme

10.2 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

10.3 Minutes of the Executive Group

The minutes of the Executive Group meetings of 24 June 2010, 12 July 2010, 22 July 2010 and 30 September 2010 were received.

11 Matters arising (LTW 364)

On the issue of including information about National Rail services in the Transport for London Christmas leaflet, The Director, Research & Development, reported that TfL had asked London TravelWatch to approach the Association of Train Operating Companies about contributing £6,000 towards the cost. He had done this and was also investigating potential opportunities of meeting the cost through sponsorship.

Action: Director, Research & Development

The Chair reported that there had been no response as yet to the suggestion that the London Assembly consider a scrutiny on the issue of transport access to healthcare.

In relation to the reporting of Transport for London complaints data, the Chair stated that TfL was investigating configurations and reporting formats and that reporting should begin shortly. She agreed to forward to David Leibling an email she had received from TfL on this subject.

Action: Chair

On the issue of the impact of the Jobseekers Allowance concessionary fares scheme, it was agreed that Daniel Francis would investigate whether it would be possible for an interested Member of Parliament to table a parliamentary question on this matter.

Action: Daniel Francis

It was agreed that the Director, Research & Development, would keep members updated about changes to London Underground ticket vending machines.

Action: Director, Research & Development

12 Actions taken (LTW 365)

The report was noted.

13 Annual accounts (LTW 368)

Some members expressed concern that the annual accounts had been approved without reference to the Board. The Chief Executive noted that the financial procedures would shortly be changed to enable draft accounts to be seen by the Board prior to formal approval. The current financial procedures did not allow this to happen.

Action: Director, Finance & Personnel

It was noted that London TravelWatch's governance arrangements as a whole would need to be reviewed if it was to proceed in the New Year with a much reduced Board.

Action: Committee Services

14 London TravelWatch's workplan 2010/11 (LTW 369)

Members discussed the proposals for future research reports. It was noted that the Station Standards report had been published and that a report on walking and work on a Passengers Charter was also underway.

It was noted that two bus surgeries were planned for early in the new year, one taking place in Kinston, the other in either Southall or Newham.

Members discussed the future of London TravelWatch's borough liaison role in light of the reduction in the number of Board members. It was noted that this activity might not be able to be continued in future and if this was confirmed the boroughs would be informed.

15 Any other business

The Chair formally thanked the departing Board members, Kevin Davis, Daniel Francis, Teena Lashmore, Sarah Pond and Lorna Reith, for their work during their terms of office.

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 the remainder of the meeting.

During the confidential session, members reviewed the meeting.

The next meeting of the full Board will be held on 1 February 2011.