
Minutes

Agenda item : 3
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**Minutes of a meeting of the Access to Transport Committee
held on 7 July 2009 at 6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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Present

Members

Onjali Bodrul, Kevin Davis (item 1 to 8), Gail Engert (Chair), Sarah Pond, Andrew Probert, Lorna Reith, Sharon Grant (London TravelWatch Chair) (item 1 to 6)

Guests

Stephen Thomas Assistant Chief Constable, British Transport Police (BTP) (item 3)
Matt Winfield Manager Stakeholder Engagement, Transport for London (item 4 to 12)

Staff

Committee Administrator; Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

Note : In these minutes, 'previous Committees' refers to the Transport Accessibility Committee, the Access to Health Care Facilities Taskforce and the Community Safety Taskforce combined, whose remits are henceforth the sole concern of this Access to Transport Committee.

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction, announcements and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members and guests and made the standard housekeeping announcements. All members were present.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

3 Crime on the Underground and Neighbourhood Policing

The Chair welcomed Assistant Chief Constable Stephen Thomas to the meeting to discuss the recent statistical rise in the number of sexual assaults across the rail and underground network, and whether this hides a problem of non-reported cases, and what might be done to reduce them. Mr Thomas began his presentation noting that whilst sexual offences did not appear on the list of National Operational Priorities, the British Transport Police (BTP).[something missing here]

Nationally in 2008/09 crime had fallen 15 per cent on 2005/06, with a 2.6 per cent reduction in sexual offences compared to 2007/08. In London (North and South BTP areas), where three quarters of offences were reported, there was a 17 per cent overall reduction (With a 1.4 reduction in sexual offences compared to 2007/08). However, in the London area (GLA boundary) there was a 4.2 per cent increase in sexual offences compared to 2007/08. Detection rates for crime were in general lower in London than the rest of the country. Sexual offences were linked to warm weather : March 2009 was unusually warm and there was an increase in offences in that month. The offences tend to take place on trains at peak hours, but there was under-reporting of these type of offences. Mr Thomas noted that most victims of this type of crime were young white females aged under 20; the perpetrators of serious offences usually did not pre-plan their crimes and were alcohol related. Victims were more likely to report a crime if it had happened to them previously.

Members queried whether the BTP spoke to young women in schools and colleges about these offences. He undertook to let members know if this happened.

Action : BTP

Mr Thomas explained that there was a larger number of registered sexual offenders in London than the rest of the country. Two serial offenders arrested in the BTP's London South area were responsible for 6 crimes. In response to a question, Mr Thomas informed members that as part of their bail conditions restrictions could be placed on them to deny them use of the rail network. The BTP works with hostel staff where offenders live and in certain circumstances may apply for an anti-social behaviour order.

It was agreed that the Chair of London TravelWatch would raise this issue when she attended a meeting of the London Youth Parliament and would confirm whether it was common and did victims report it.

Action : Chair, London TravelWatch

Mr Thomas undertook to see what information was given to schools and colleges by the BTP, TfL and the London Underground (LUL) school programme.

Action : BTP

Mr Thomas noted that in the last 2 years he had worked to encourage LUL neighbourhood policing teams to not limit themselves to just their underground station, if this also included a national rail station. He had encouraged them to also patrol the national rail station. He outlined that neighbourhood policing programme was sensitive to funding. TOCs had the funding of policing built into their franchises. The Mayor had committed to funding neighbourhood policing teams until 2013.

The London Transport Community Safety partnership meets once a month and publishes the Community Safety strategy each year and Mr Thomas had successfully convinced ATOC and Network Rail to participate in this.

In response to a question on the recent franchise National Express East Coast, which is expected to revert to Government control towards the end of this year, Mr Thomas confirmed that at present the arrangements with the Train Operating Company will continue.

4 Nomination and election of Deputy Chair of the Committee

Onjali Bodrul was elected as Deputy Chair.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2009 were agreed.

It was agreed to have a short report on the Euston-St Pancras interchange at the September meeting.

Action : Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

6 Matters arising (AT003)

A member asked what the plans were for step free access on the underground network. TfL would find out what the plans were after 2013.

Action : TfL

It was agreed to write to TfL about the suspension of the installation of solar panels in bus stops.

Action : London TravelWatch

7 Access to Healthcare Facilities (AT004, AT005, AT006)

The Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer explained the background of the reports to members. The work of the Access to Healthcare Facilities task force had engaged with the management of NHS London, but the next task was to engage at Trust level.

The Deputy Chair of London TravelWatch felt that the proportion of disabled parking available should be included in the hospital site surveys.

The Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer noted that his draft report on hospital travel plans was an attempt to show to Trusts what makes a good travel plan and what London TravelWatch wants to see.

8 Bus stop accessibility (AT007)

This report summarised the work that London TravelWatch had been carrying out on bus stop accessibility. This work goes back 3 years and a key area of work was trying to engage with councillors on bus stop accessibility. In the past London TravelWatch had written to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). TfL have been informed about London TravelWatch's work in this area. The aim of the Board's work at present is to challenge some London borough's view that

the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) can be set aside following consultation with residents. Advice from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) had been sought.

Members discussed the positives and negatives of hail-and-ride services. There were competing views from passengers who were not wheelchair users and those that were. Fixed stops would benefit wheelchair users, but more able-bodied passengers would lose the ability to get on and off a service where they wished.

Members took the view that where fixed stops could be provided, they should be. The Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer would discover what the views of DPTAC and IDAG were on this issue and report back to the committee.

Action : Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

9 Any other business

None.

10 Resolution to move into confidential session

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

Members approved the confidential minutes of the meeting on 5 May 2009 and went on to discuss future meetings.

The next meeting would be held on 16 September 2009 at London TravelWatch's offices.

11 Glossary

ATOC	Association of Train Operating Companies
BTP	British Transport Police
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DPTAC	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
DRC	Disability Rights Commission (Now merged with other bodies to form the EHRC)
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
GLA	Greater London Assembly
IDAG	Independent Disability Advisory Group, TfL
LUL	London Underground
TfL	Transport for London
TOCs	Train Operating Companies