
Minutes

Agenda item : 3
Final Draft : 5.1.10

Minutes of a meeting of the Access to Transport Committee held on 16 December 2009 at 6 Middle Street, London EC1

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Present

Members

Onjali Bodrul (Vice Chair), Gail Engert (Chair), Sarah Pond and Sharon Grant (London TravelWatch Chair)

Guests

John Osborne	Access Officer for Disabled People, Croydon Council (item 1 to 10)
Neil Adams	Chief Engineer, Urban Traffic Control (UTC), Transport for London (for item 7)
Beverley Hall	Head of Communications, Surface Transport, TfL (items 7 and 8)
Silke Elvery	Business Manager, Surface Transport, TfL (item 8)
Matt Winfield	Manager Stakeholder Engagement, TfL

Staff

Chief Executive; Committee Administrator; Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction, announcements and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members, guests and the public and made the standard housekeeping announcements. Apologies were received from Lorna Reith.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2009 were agreed and signed for the record.

4 Matters arising (AT012)

On item 3.3 (10.11.08, minute AHTF 57) members were disappointed with the lack of response from the Royal Free Hospital. It was noted that a crossing to the Hospital had been relocated.

On item 3.4 (5.5.09, minute 5) members felt that it was important that the minutes of the meeting referred to between Transport for London (TfL) and the NHS were shared with London TravelWatch. They felt that it was important to invite the person responsible for liaising with the NHS at Transport for London (TfL) to a meeting.

Action : Secretariat

On item 3.5 (7.7.09, minute 3) the Chief Executive reported that she had attended a meeting of the Youth Parliament transport group. She felt it was not appropriate to influence their agenda.

On item 3.8 (16.9.09, minute 6) the Chair asked that the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) be asked for their views on the priority seat fabric.

Action : Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

Members felt that London Overground (LOROL) should also review the new train fleet after six months.

On item 3.12 (16.9.09, minute 9) the Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer would discuss the list of stations that have platform humps further with London Underground (LUL).

Action : Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

5 Actions taken (AT013)

The report was noted.

6 Croydon Access group

The Chair welcomed Mr Osborne to the meeting.

Mr Osborne described his roles within Croydon Council and the borough and outlined the mobility forums role and duties. The forum is comprised of four councillors, four council officers, seven voluntary sector representatives, six service users and two carer representatives. The forum meets five times a year. Members of the forum are nominated to serve on other groups, for example, the Transport Liaison group or Road safety group.

There are several recurring items on the forum's agenda, such as, Dial-a-Ride, concession schemes and taxi card. The forum receives regular updates from Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and TfL, and has produced a guide to accessible transport in Croydon (<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/contents/departments/healthsocial/pdf/accessibletransport.pdf>). London Councils is currently carrying out a study on the Croydon Mobility Forum to assess it against other

boroughs and develop a best practice model across London.

The Chair asked Mr Osborne about other mobility forums in the Greater London Authority (GLA) area. Mr Osborne replied that the coverage varied between boroughs and that job descriptions differed. For instance, some mobility forums have no involvement in transport.

A member asked if the NHS was invited to meetings. Mr Osborne replied that, under the terms of reference of the forum, there needed to be a Primary Care Trust (PCT) representative present at meetings. However, in practice the PCT representative was not a frequent attendee. However, the lack of transport services to hospitals was a regular topic of discussion on the forum.

The Chair of London TravelWatch discussed with Mr Osborne how London TravelWatch and the Croydon Mobility Forum could work together. The Chair of London TravelWatch felt that the two organisations should work together rather than duplicate work.

Mr Osborne noted that there is a plan to extend the tram network to Crystal Palace Park. This has been discussed at the Croydon Mobility Forum, but the other boroughs which border the park have no mobility forums. It was important to get cross-border interaction first. There was no mention of mobility forums in the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the idea of Access Officers in boroughs has also been dropped.

A member felt that it was important to pick up common themes emerging from the mobility forums in boroughs through the borough liaison work.

The Chief Executive would send a copy of the report from the Croydon bus surgery to Mr Osborne.

Action : Chief Executive

7 Plans to rephrase traffic lights and pedestrian crossing countdown proposals

The Chair welcomed Mr Adams and Ms Hall to the meeting, whose slide presentation to accompany these notes may be found on London TravelWatch website

Mr Adams began his presentation by noting that TfL owns and operates all traffic signals in London (on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and Borough road network). He went on to describe the types of traffic signals : local control (the times are set locally); fixed time (computer controlled); and SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) (around 100 to 200 of these traffic lights are being installed each year). Ms Hall would supply a map of the coverage of traffic lights.

Action : TfL

TfL was trying to improve the overall operation of traffic lights. TfL's preferred measure for the degree of saturation (how a traffic light performs) is 80 to 89 per cent. A low saturation wastes time and a high saturation means traffic does not clear. The traffic lights that have been reviewed have seen a 10 per cent improvement.

Major developments had been introduced such as the Oxford Circus diagonal crossing. Similar improvements were being carried out at Piccadilly Circus and other locations. TfL was reviewing the work done so far on traffic lights and would share the results with London TravelWatch.

Action : TfL

Mr Adams highlighted the research carried out at traffic signal sites where the green man frequency had been reduced. The research noted that some pedestrians had been confused by the blackout between the green and red man. A new traffic light was being trialled where a countdown would let

pedestrians know how much time they would have to cross the road. TfL offered to let London TravelWatch see it.

The Chair asked how traffic lights detect people standing. Mr Adams replied that there are two types of traffic lights : on crossing, which keeps the traffic back until people cross, and on-demand which does not work as well.

A member noted that the research results highlighted that mobility-impaired pedestrians noticed the changes most. They also asked how something could be deemed to be "safety neutral", when non-compliance had increased. Ms Hall replied that the non-compliance rate had risen from 59 per cent to 61 per cent.

The Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer asked what traffic engineers were doing differently now and whether there would be extra capacity on the road network outside the Congestion Charge zone. Mr Adams replied that there was a finite capacity on the network. The review of traffic lights was making pinch points more efficient.

Ms Hall noted that there needs to be a balance. Where additional capacity is found it can then be allocated to bus priority, general traffic or to pedestrians. Each junction needed to be looked at and how it functioned.

8 Countdown priorities

The Chair welcomed Ms Elvery to the meeting whose slide presentation to accompany these notes may be found on London TravelWatch website

Ms Elvery reported that the new Countdown system would make better use of new technology and at a lower cost. Currently 20 per cent of the network is covered by Countdown signs, but the new system would not just be signs, but internet fixed and mobile and texting. Ms Hall noted that passengers could look at the internet before they left home. There would be signs in shopping centres, hospitals, etc, but they would be flat screen TVs funded by the particular institution / organisation using TfLs internet application to display information similar to that on the signs. Additionally Passengers could send texts to receive information. The Chair asked if Countdown would continue to be free at the point of access. Ms Elvery replied that text messages would be charged for. Ms Hall explained that TfL had financial limitations in its ability to widen Countdown. Internet, mobile internet and signs are free.

Ms Elvery noted that on the allocation of signs, TfL had looked afresh at where the greatest benefit to passengers would be on the network. Old signs were being removed and if bus stops did not fulfil criteria they would not have new Countdown signs installed. Ms Hall reported that 2,500 signs would be installed (though the contract allowed for 4000). Ms Elvery noted that stakeholder engagement would start in January 2010. TfL would provide the London boroughs with lists of bus stops, which are earmarked to receive a sign and then rely on boroughs and others for local knowledge on where signs should be installed.

A member suggested that it would be helpful to have signs on low frequency bus routes. Ms Elvery replied that town centres often had both high and low frequency services, with people interchanging between them.

Members felt it was important to note that not all passengers would have access to the internet or a mobile phone. A member felt that it was important to use the borough liaison work to identify those groups who would not have access. Ms Hall stated that TfL continues to work hard to reach the hard to reach groups.

Ms Hall said that TfL would share its work with boroughs and responses with London TravelWatch. The Chair of London TravelWatch felt that the name, Countdown, should be changed as there was a danger of confusing the public. Ms Elvery stated that initial research showed that passengers liked Countdown, but did not like other suggestions made.

Mr Osborne asked whether visually impaired people would have an audio version. Ms Elvery replied that there would be.

9 Shared surfaces

The Committee viewed three presentations on shared surface schemes. The three presentations can be viewed on-line at Youtube :

Kensington and Chelsea

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqGWz_lafa8

Examples from Europe

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLfasxqhBNU>

Criticisms of shared surface schemes by Guide dogs for the Blind

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFFf83HMmbE&feature=rec-LGOUT-exp_fresh+div-1r-1-HM

The Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had been persuaded by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) to carry out a review of the shared surface scheme on Exhibition Road.

Mr Osborne noted that Guide dogs for the Blind were against shared surfaces because they feel that partially sighted or blind people need delineation of where the edge of the pavement is. The Chair noted that they had threatened a judicial review on the shared surface scheme on Exhibition Road.

10 Any other business

The Chair and the Vice Chair had met with the British Transport Police (BTP) twice since the last meeting regarding the presentation from the British Transport Police on sexual offences. They had also met with the BTP's neighbourhood policing team.

11 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 16 September 2009 and went on to discuss future meetings.

The next meeting would be held on 3 February 2010 at London TravelWatch's offices.

12 Glossary

BTP	British Transport Police
DfT	Department for Transport
DPTAC	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
GLA	Greater London Authority
LOROL	London Overground
LUL	London Underground Limited
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RNIB	Royal National Institute for the Blind
SCOOT	Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (an adaptive system that responds automatically to fluctuations in the traffic flow)
TfL	Transport for London
TLRN	Transport for London Road Network
TOCs	Train Operating Companies