
Minutes

Agenda item 5(b)
Drafted 21.1.10

Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Executive Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 12 November 2009

Present

Sharon Grant (SG)
Lorna Reith (LR)
Sarah Pond (SP)
Gail Engert (GE)
David Leibling (DL)

Chair
Deputy Chair

Janet Cooke (JC)
Patti Tobin (PT)
Bryan Davey (BD)
Jo deBank (JdB)
Amy Waters (AW)

Chief Executive
Director, Finance & Personnel
Director, Public Liaison (minute 6)
Communications Officer (minute 7)
Chief Executive/Chair's PA (temporary) – Note taker

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Draft minutes of meeting held on 19 October 2009

SG expressed concern that the minute on the six monthly workplan delivery report did not reflect the detailed discussion which took place and asked that the working notes which AW had taken be added to the minutes and the wording be revised to reflect that.

JC

JC pointed out that the detailed points made in the meeting had been reflected in the revised version which had gone to the Board. LR said she had expressed concern about the potential issue of target dates bunching up as a result of dates being changed where slippage occurred and that this had not been reflected in either the Executive minutes or brought up at the Board meeting.

3. Matters arising

Update to Communications Strategy – LR asked that it be recorded in the minutes that this was one of three papers which had been circulated the previous day and not the week before, as agreed. JC apologised and told members that there had been a few emergencies requiring her attention such as co-ordinating the mail out of Board papers in the Senior Committee Administrator's absence which she had had to prioritise.

Withdrawal of Arriva Cross Country Trains – SG confirmed that this would be addressed at the forthcoming meeting with the Department for Transport.

SG

NHS North East London – JC reported that the Senior Policy Officer (Streets and Surface) had attended a meeting which he had said was very useful.

JC

Executive / Non-Executive Members – SG asked members to reflect on what they would like to do the following year and suggested that the existing committee structure remain for now and be reviewed at the end of 2010. JC supported this suggestion but added that she would like to reconsider the frequency of some meetings and the amount of work involved. SG reminded members of the Executive to have regard to business plan priorities in planning their committee agendas.

ALL

Transport users' surgery – There was some discussion on the event scheduled in Croydon on 17 November and JC confirmed that the post-event evaluation would be taken into account in planning the February event.

JC

Chair's update –

- **Andrew Probert** – SG reported that she had discussed the appointment of a replacement member to this vacancy with Val Shawcross, but it was felt to be wise to wait until after the elections. AP had had an exit interview with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Transport Committee.
- **Passenger Focus** – further discussion of the overlap issue had been deferred until after the general election.
- **London Councils TEC** – SG, JC, the Director, Research and Development and the Communications Officer had met with this group earlier in the day. SG reported that our advice and guidance had been offered, member level liaison had been discussed and that the door had been left open for further discussion.

4. Finance report and accounts – October 2009

PT discussed the finance report and management accounts with the Executive, and confirmed she was confident that earmarked expenditure would be spent by the financial year end as various large items of expenditure had yet to be paid including the fee for archiving, management development training and some items of office furniture. LR and DL asked when the training would take place and whether staff holidays etc. been taken into consideration. PT said that staff absence hadn't been factored in and the date was yet to be confirmed.

JC circulated a confidential report summarising variances of staffing costs as requested at the last meeting, and together with PT elaborated on the various items. The Executive noted the position as regards individual staff members.

5. Chief Executive's report

JC highlighted that the PA post was currently under review and that she was considering splitting the post into two part time posts, one to act as a diary secretary and the second to act as an executive assistance to the Chief Executive which would be at a higher grade, initial appointments

would be made on a temporary basis to test the effectiveness of the change. LR suggested the use of agency staff for this purpose. At this point members were notified that AW would be leaving the organisation on the 19 November for another role, and members expressed their gratitude for her assistance during the last year.

The Executive agreed in principle to the proposal to acquire prepaid Oyster cards for member travel next year and JC said she would bring further details to a future meeting.

JC

6. Business Continuity – updated policy

BD joined the meeting to discuss the proposed amendments to the policy and JC said that very few changes to the agreed policy were suggested. There was discussion over the importance of staff knowing their jobs in a crisis situation and, in answer to a query, it was confirmed that the office answer phone message and web page information could be changed remotely. In respect of testing the business continuity plan, BD said he had asked for a cross selection of documents to be identified that we would ask our service provider to retrieve in order to ensure that the computer back-up arrangements were working satisfactorily.

The changes were agreed and SG invited the Executive members to feedback any further comments.

7. Communications Strategy Update

An updated appendix to the report was circulated listing the communications related priorities set out in the business plans for 2008-9, 2009-10 and 2010-11. JdB joined the meeting for discussion of the report which updated the Executive with key changes to the organisation and resourcing of communications activity since the strategy had been agreed early in 2008.

SG said she was concerned about internal communications and suggested a regular update be sent notifying Board members about current work, the frequency and implications of such an initiative were discussed.

SP said that she felt the report was very driven by our business plan priorities and didn't really capture the matters discussed with Vernon Everitt (Transport for London) at the last Board meeting.

DL said that he would like to know the sources of appeals and queried whether it would be appropriate to have a question in the omnibus survey. JdB said that she believed that this was mentioned in the last strategy and that she would investigate further.

SG disagreed with the comment in the paper that London TravelWatch was "rarely able to set the news agenda" and said that we should be able to do this.

GE agreed with the suggestion that best use should be made of the opportunities that Board and committee meetings offered to raise the profile of the organisation and mentioned the positive impact that suitable guest speakers could have on attendance at public meetings.

It was confirmed that the "How to Complain" leaflet was currently being produced for the Consumer Affairs Committee and members requested that this be included within the action plan.

It was agreed that an event should be held to mark the 60th anniversary of London TravelWatch but agreed that this need not be too closely linked with the specific date, particularly because it would coincide with the forthcoming elections.

It was also agreed to pursue the suggestion that the London TravelWatch logo to be featured beside our contact details on buses to help raise our profile as a separate organisation.

The Communications Officer was asked to produce a detailed communications action plan for 2010-11 taking into account the suggestions made in the discussion. She was also asked to produce a further revision of the communications strategy.

JdB

8. Investors in People (IiP)

PT reported that she was in the process of arranging for IiP Assessor, to meet with the Executive, as requested at the last meeting. A provisional date of 23 November 4pm-6pm was discussed and PT agreed to confirm this with members once she had received confirmation.

PT

PT introduced the item by summarising the IiP process and the role it played in helping organisations to improve, she also reminded the Executive of London TravelWatch's IiP history. She also went through the Action Plan produced in response to the Assessor's report.

There was a detailed discussion about the assessment report and members expressed their concern about the picture it presented of the organisation, particularly in respect of staff perceptions of their roles and that of the board. It was agreed that the Executive would seek an urgent meeting with the Assessor to obtain a full understanding of the issues he had raised.

LR requested a copy of the IiP assessment criteria so she could be familiar with what we were being measured against and PT agreed to circulate these to the Executive.

PT

There was further discussion on the process of IiP and whether it was a worthwhile and SG stated that it should be viewed positively as a vehicle to improve relations so organisation could move forward.

9. Board issues:

- a) **Informal meeting 10.11.09** – SG reported the good news that TfL had agreed to involve London TravelWatch more closely in future with their research. JC agreed to circulate Board actions to the Executive as well as the Chair in future.

JC

b) **Committee report backs of key issues arising from meetings –**

- GE reported from the last Access to Transport committee meeting that she had a successful meeting with the British Transport Police on the subject of sexual assault;
- GE also reported that a business breakfast meeting to promote the idea of an improved walking route between Euston and St Pancras Stations had been arranged for January 2010 and that further information would be circulated in due course.

- c) **Informal meeting 8.12.09** – The key topics for this meeting would be :

- David Barry's proposed re-wording of the description of our remit
- Response to the consultation on the Mayor's Transport Strategy
- Key messages to be used to promote London TravelWatch to stakeholders
- Committee membership for 2010
- SG confirmed that the Board had been invited to the Bus Consultation event at City Hall in the morning and that after the informal meeting staff would join the Board for the annual Christmas drinks.

d) Other board business

- DL reported that a meeting to discuss litter had taken place between Network Rail and London Councils to discuss litter and questioned why we hadn't been invited, and asked that this be reported to the next Transport Services meeting.

JC

- DL suggested that someone from Passenger Focus be invited to talk to London TravelWatch about their bus research.

SG/JC

- GE mentioned the lack of first aid facilities at Highgate Station and it was agreed to investigate this matter further at the Access to Transport committee.

GE