
Minutes

Agenda item 5(b)
Drafted 18.2.10

Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Executive Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 21 January 2010

Present

Sharon Grant (SG)
Lorna Reith (LR)
David Barry (DB)
Gail Engert (GE)
David Leibling (DL)

Chair
Deputy Chair

Janet Cooke (JC)
Patti Tobin (PT)
Peter Ellis (PE)

Chief Executive
Director, Finance & Personnel
Senior Finance Officer (minute 5)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Pond (SP). David Barry (as Vice Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee) attended in her absence.

2. Draft minutes of meeting held on 12 November 2009

These were agreed but it was noted that there were still problems in producing them in a timely fashion.

3. Matters arising

Communications – In response to queries JC noted that an update on the 'How to Complain' leaflet and the 0845 number research would be reported to the Consumer Affairs Committee.

Withdrawal of Arriva Cross Country Trains – JC reported that the service was to be reinstated as is shown in the proposed timetable to be implemented in May. More details should be circulated for information and the role that London TravelWatch had played in this should be publicised at the appropriate time.

JC

Board issues – JC confirmed that the queries in respect of the Network Rail / London Councils meeting on litter, and provision of first aid facilities at stations would be answered at the Transport

Services and Access to Transport Committees respectively. In respect of the Passenger Focus bus research she reminded the meeting that London TravelWatch had commissioned additional activity on this research to gauge the perspective of passengers in London. It was hoped that this would be available for presentation to the March Board meeting.

JC

4. Chair's update

Chairing of Consumer Affairs Committee – SG welcomed DB to the meeting, and reported that in view of a prolonged absence by the Consumer Affairs Committee Chair, she proposed that DB as vice-chair should act for the duration, expected to be until the end of March, and that SP had agreed that remuneration should be adjusted accordingly. This was agreed.

Staff sickness – SG began by updating members to the ongoing serious levels of staff sickness and the impact this continued to have on other staff as well as the difficulties in keeping up with the workload in the face of such absence, the organisation had been extraordinarily unlucky in this respect. DL expressed his concern at the impact on staff morale. PT confirmed the management arrangements for dealing with sickness and that we continued to be proactive in addressing the issues. It was agreed that SG should draw this to the attention of the Chair of the Transport Committee because of its impact on performance.

SG

Proposed Euston – St Pancras walking route – SG noted that the business breakfast held to discuss this last week had been very successful but that she had been concerned that the opportunity for publicity around this even had not been seized, as London Travelwatch had succeeded in getting an impressive range of high level stakeholders together to focus on this problem.

Transport users' surgery – The second of these would be held in Romford on 5 March.

Staff / Board awayday – This was confirmed for 22 February and would focus particularly on addressing the issues identified by the Investors in People assessor. DL said he would need to send his apologies for this event.

Meetings – SG said that she and the Director of Research and Development had had a very useful meeting with the Transport Minister, Chris Mole. Topics discussed included the current problems with First Capital Connect's service, our concerns that the short time scales on the re-letting of the Greater Anglia rail franchise meant there would be insufficient time for proper passenger consultation, and the delay in implementing the new passenger rights arising from recent European Union legislation. SG and JC hoped to organise a meeting with Peter Hendy soon.

JC

Income generation – SG reminded members that one of the items in next year's business plan was to explore opportunities for income generation and work would need to start on this early in the year.

JC

5. Finance report and accounts – December 2010

PE introduced this report and, following discussion, clarification was sought in respect of the forecast revenue deficit for 2009/10. It was subsequently agreed that additional information about the forecast revenue result would in future be added to the monthly finance report.

PE

Members requested a full breakdown of how the budget for the Chief Executive's review had been spent be given at the end of the year.

PE

6. Chief Executive's report

The Chief Executive's report was discussed with particular reference to the impact of staff absence, further details were given of how the organisation works with its occupational health provider to help manage sickness. PT confirmed the process for checking sick absence records as part of taking up references before offers of employment were made to new staff. She pointed out that employers were increasingly reluctant to pass on too much information in writing.

It was agreed that the transport users' surgery held in Croydon in November had been very successful, JC confirmed that a report would be prepared for the Board once the second surgery in Romford had taken place.

JC

7. HR monitoring report

The report, including anonymised details of staff sickness figures, was noted. PT was asked to clarify the position in respect of the annual cost of living rise for Board members.

PT

8. Internal audit reports

The Executive were pleased to note that the GLA's internal auditors had confirmed that all the actions arising from their audit of London TravelWatch's risk management procedures had been addressed satisfactorily. They noted that the recent audit of business continuity arrangements had judged these to give 'substantial assurance' and that only two recommendations for action had been made.

9. Draft GLA six monthly performance report

The draft report was discussed in detail. There was discussion about the limited improvements noted, and also that the report should highlight achievement across the range of our work, rather than simply casework. JC was asked to incorporate a range of amendments in the final report to reflect the suggestions made by members.

JC

10. Quarterly monitoring of work plan delivery

JC updated the Executive verbally on progress against the business plan as at the end of quarter three. She agreed to incorporate the additional information requested and circulate an updated version.

JC

11. Board issues:

- a) **Chairs' meeting** – SG confirmed that she would like to discuss the Board and Committee work plans for the forthcoming year to ensure that agenda items were aligned with business plan priorities. It was agreed that an extra hour should be added to the agenda of the next Executive meeting for this purpose, members would be sent another copy of next year's business plan in advance to help focus their thinking. She and JC would also give an assessment of how the new system was working.
- b) **Forthcoming Board meeting 26.1.10** – The key theme for this would be roads and the agenda would include items on the Mayor's proposals for 'Smoothing the Traffic', road maintenance and traffic gyratory systems, with particular reference to Tottenham Hale. In the afternoon the public would be invited to share their experiences of how recent disruption to transport services had been handled by different operators.
- c) **Matters arising from committee meetings** – LR noted that the current work being carried out around good practice for stations and interchanges could help to promote our presence at a local level. JC updated members on arrangements put in place for committee servicing during the absence of the Senior Committee Administrator.

12. Any other business

SG said that it had been suggested that London TravelWatch should nominate someone to TfL's proposed Independent Programme Advisory Group to ensure that passenger interests as well as engineering considerations were taken into account. It was agreed that she should write to the Mayor to propose this.

SG

DL noted that the Government had just published the details of Passenger Focus' forthcoming remit in respect of buses.