
Minutes

Agenda item : 4 a)

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**Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Board held on 19 May 2009
at 6 Middle Street, London EC1.**

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Present :

Members

Sharon Grant (Chair), Lorna Reith (Vice Chair) David Barry, Terry Bennett, Onjali Bodrul, Kevin Davis. Gail Engert. Daniel Francis, Sophia Lambert, Teena Lashmore, David Leibling, Andrew Probert,

Public Gallery

Matt Winfield Manager, Stakeholder Engagement, Transport for London (TfL)
Cathy Philpot Chair, British Motorcycling Federation
8 members of the public

In attendance

Chief Executive Officer, Director, Research and Development, Streets and Surface Policy Officer (minute 9)

Committee Administrator, Senior Committee Administrator (minutes).

Minutes

1 Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements

The Chair welcomed members and public.

2 Apologies for absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted from Sarah Pond. No additional declarations of interest were made, and the Chair reminded the public that there is a standing declaration of members' interests which may be found on the London TravelWatch website.

3 Chair's activities and report from Passenger Focus Board

The Chair reported that it had been an interesting month in that the first cycle of meetings in the new committees structure would be complete the following day with the first meeting of the Transport Services Committee. She commented that the new structure allowed London TravelWatch to focus more clearly on its chosen themes.

The Board had undertaken the first of a series of offsite briefings on 21 April 2009, with 'Riding the Rails'. The Chair thanked the secretariat for its work on this. There had also been an visit to Croydon with David Leibling, the Chief Executive and the Director, Research and Development, looking specifically at Tram and interchange arrangements in the light of plans for Croydon's development as a new transport hub.

The Chair had met with TfL about its research programme and discussed how London TravelWatch could work more closely with TfL. A memorandum of understanding was discussed with a view to there being greater sharing of TfL's research findings.

The Chair, Chief Executive Officer and the Director, Research and Development had also met with consultants from KPMG and SDG who were undertaking a review of bus service procurement on behalf of the Mayor.

On behalf of the Board the Chair had attended the farewell event for Tim O'Toole from London Underground and the Passenger Focus conference, with David Leibling. She had also attended the London Assembly AGM, which was a good opportunity to promote understanding amongst assembly members of London TravelWatch's role, and a reception at City Hall for range of stakeholders. They included many youth organisations, whom the Chair had invited speak with London TravelWatch at a suitable future meeting.

Passenger Focus

The Board's representative member on the Passenger Focus Board, David Leibling, gave an oral report on the April and May Passenger Focus Board meetings.

The April meeting was held in London, and focussed on the proposed European Union directive on bus and coach passenger rights. This covered the issues of local services (exemption) versus long distance; quick compensation after an accident without proving fault; provision of alternative services and advance ticketing.

Also on the agenda was the issue of official statistics; the National Passenger Survey will become a government statistic and so be subject to greater stringency in its formation. There was also discussion regarding conflict resolution training for rail staff.

The GLA study on snow day transport had been noted, and Anthony Smith had appeared before the Transport Committee regarding airline passenger representation.

At the May meeting in Cardiff, the 2009/10 business plan was published and was available on the Passenger Focus website. The breakdown of the budget totalling £7.4m was :

Rail passengers: £4.7m; National Passenger Survey: £1.1m Buses £1.6m; of which total research and projects: £2.3m

This meeting also discussed bus representation in Wales; the Passenger Focus remit does not extend to Wales and the Welsh assembly is setting up a public transport users assembly, similar to that in Scotland.

Franchise reports on Arriva Train Wales and First Great Western were also considered, and the publication of 'Designing the Future', on new inter-city rolling stock.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 March 2009 were agreed and signed for the record with the following amendments.

David Probert should read Andrew Probert.

Paragraph 4, p 4 : a member requested that the line referring to taxis should read that they work 'often or frequently' to their financial targets, and that it is 'a factor to be considered'.

The minutes of the Executive Group meetings held on 12 February and 12 March 2009 were noted. It was agreed that the working papers on the reserves policy discussed in the March meeting would be circulated to members.

Action : Chief Executive Officer

5 Matters arising (LTW 303)

Members requested a glossary of acronyms and terms be added to the end of the report.

It was agreed that the matter of network signage referred to in paragraph 2.2 was to be taken forward by the Access to Transport Committee

6 Action taken (LTW 304)

It was suggested that the response to the Outer London Commission did not reflect the policy of the Board, and that it might be construed as being anti-car. The Director, Research and Development reported that the response to the Outer London Commission had been in answer to specific questions, one of which asked how growth may be accommodated. Its report is due later in 2009.

7 London TravelWatch Draft Accounts 2008-9 (LTW 305)

The accounts were noted; final accounts will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

8 Bus Network overview (LTW306, LTW307, LTW308)

The Director, Research and Development, gave an over view of the bus network in London. The full presentation and supporting documents may be viewed on the London TravelWatch website.

Members were invited to note that the national level of subsidy for bus services is less than £600m, whilst TfL spends more than £600m subsidising London buses alone. The fleet is now fully accessible but bus stops are not. London TravelWatch has written to the Chair of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission for advice and support in challenging local authorities to ensure the bus stops that they manage are fully accessible.

On the bus crime map it was cautioned that crimes may be reported only at the terminus point of bus routes. Crime is defined as both non-payment of fares, and on other offences. A member suggested that figures for reported crime rate against the number of passengers per hour would be more useful.

In London there is a regulated market, with centrally-set fares. Therefore the operator has no control over the level of fares in either case. TfL takes the risk of revenue losses or gains. Outside London one of the reasons that fares have risen higher than inflation is that private companies have been working to a free market system.

The difference between 'gross' and 'net' contracts was outlined as follows : in a gross contract, TfL and the operator agree the entire cost of operating the route in advance, so TfL carries the risk numbers of passengers fall. The inverse is also true and so it is up to the operator to control their costs.

A net cost contract is where the operator takes the financial risk of the fares and so is directly affected by the number of passengers. The advantage here is that TfL sets how much it pays for the service.

Members requested that some information on luggage rules for buses be included in the network overview document. It was agreed to include in the second draft.

The Mayor's forthcoming commissioned report from KPMG on bus tendering methodology would include more detail on the tendering system. The Chair confirmed that there will be a Board briefing day similar to 'Riding the Rails' on the buses later in the year. Members were invited to submit suggestions for particularly difficult routes to the Chair.

Dead mileage (LTW 307)

It was suggested that there may not be any great advantage in 'livening dead mileage' but the Director, Research and Development responded that there may be some gain in early mornings and late evenings, if there is no other service running. It could also present a cost saving to TfL.

The precise size of the problem was difficult to measure as the data regarding this was commercially sensitive and had not been available to the report writer. However, London TravelWatch was aware that on the Underground there is virtually no dead mileage as a matter of policy.

Members agreed that the report's recommendations be referred to TfL. It was also agreed that this issue would be referred to the Transport Services Committee for further action.

Acton : Committee Services

Golders Green and Stamford Hill (LTW 308)

The research would be publicised by London TravelWatch. The Chair confirmed that London TravelWatch wants TfL to look at this seriously and to consider providing services, perhaps on

a trial basis, and to look at other situations where there are other ethnic and religious minorities which may need specific services.

Action : Research and Development Team

9 Motorcycles in bus lanes (LTW 309)

London TravelWatch has previously taken a 'wait and see' approach to the various studies, but there is still no clear evidence on the matter. Interim results on the research would not be available from TfL until September meeting of the board, but the statutory deadline for comment was June 2009.

London TravelWatch had received a freedom of information (FOI) request from the British Motorcycling Federation, and comments from London Cycling Campaign (LCC). LCC was not represented at this meeting but the BMF was in attendance.

BMF is primarily in favour for safety and ease of travel reasons. LCC is entrenched on the opposite side – e.g. safety – as motorcyclists are involved disproportionately in collisions. It may also deter cyclists, and there is some evidence from a TRL study in Westminster that it may affect bus services.

DfT has produced guidance, looking at each bus lane on its own merit, but TfL has chosen not to do this. A video survey is being undertaken of a lot of junctions, which will hopefully provide conclusive evidence. There was a TfL study which was completed over many years. There is also a leaked initial report, which stated that the trial was a beneficial for all users.

The report from Westminster was inconclusive, and TfL itself has stated that the evidence is inconclusive. There will clearly be a dilution of priority for buses but it would take a longer study to establish evidence for this.

Members were concerned that pedestrians would not see motorcyclists in bus lanes, and that there would be confusion both on the part of motorcyclists and pedestrians as to which bus lanes it applied to. The TfL representative at the meeting reported that each borough is its own traffic authority so consistency and local autonomy is difficult to achieve. We?? have been working with bus drivers and radio ads etc. He also gave the reason for lack of evidence so far as being the four-month time lag for receiving accident data from Metropolitan police.

Members agreed that the Board's response to the consultation would reiterate the original concerns about the trial, and recommend that no decision to make it permanent should be made before there was sufficient evidence available for stakeholders to comment fully.

10 Board and Committees restructure 2009 (LTW 310)

Members agreed the amended the terms of reference.

11 Department for Transport consultation on extension of Passenger Focus's remit to include airlines and airports (LTW 311)

Members considered the suggested London TravelWatch response to this consultation as outlined in paper LTW 311. All recommendations in the paper were agreed by the Board for action by the Secretariat.

12 Future meetings

The next Board confidential briefing would be on 9 June, with the next public Board meeting on 30 June at City Hall.

13 Any other business

Cycling in London and Crossing the Border 2 were published on the day of this meeting.

The report will be sent to all outer London boroughs, local councils outside the area and all members of parliament.

14 Resolution to move into confidential session

Members 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 this session, members agreed the confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 March and discussed the London TravelWatch work plan.