
Minutes

Agenda item : 4
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**Minutes of the Consumer Affairs Committee meeting held on 15 September 2010
at 6 Middle Street, London EC1**

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Present

Members

David Barry (Chair), Terry Bennett (from Item 5), Daniel Francis (Vice-Chair), Sophia Lambert, Teena Lashmore, Sarah Pond, Sharon Grant (London TravelWatch Chair)

Stakeholder Representatives

Matt Winfield Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Transport for London (TfL) (from Item 5)

Secretariat

Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Bryan Davey	Director, Public Liaison
Jo deBank	Communications Officer
Mark Donoghue	Committee Administrator
Sharon Malley	Senior Committee Administrator (minutes)
Susan Parham-McCance	Casework Manager

Minutes

- 1 Chair's introduction, pre-meeting announcements and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed members and the stakeholder representative to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lorna Reith and from Terry Bennett for lateness.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

The minutes were approved as a correct record.

4 Matters arising (CA055)

On item C/10.3.10/9 (To provide a guide to how cases are determined to be in London TravelWatch's remit), the Chief Executive reported that this would form part of the Casework Team's procedures manual. A user-friendly document was already in use by the team and this needed now to be more formally published. In light of its need to be frequently updated, it was agreed the document should be published on London TravelWatch's server.

Action: Casework Manager

On C/21.5.10/C3 (To send the How to Complain leaflet to a designer) it was reported that the leaflet was now at the designer for final amends and would be issued shortly to the printer.

Action: Communications Officer

On C/12.5.10/C4 (To find out what is the equalities impact statement on Transport for London's strategy for communicating with passengers), Matthew Winfield apologised for the delay and assured members that the documents (a general strategy on inclusivity and a specific policy on communications) would be circulated by 17 September 2010. The policies would be sent to all Consumer Affairs Committee members.

Action: Committee Services

On C/14.7.10/4 (To follow up with the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) complaints regarding websites), the Director, Public Liaison explained that passengers were sometimes unable to tell who was responsible when a problem occurred with Internet bookings. He was seeking additional examples in order to strengthen his case on this issue when presenting it to the ORR. He noted that the ORR's workplan also included this issue.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

On C/14.7.10/5 (To check if £75 would be sent to the appellant), members discussed the issue of publicising the values of discretionary payments made by operators to passengers. It was noted that there was a danger in publishing the value of such payments of lowering the overall levels that operators were prepared to offer.

On C/14.7.10/6 (To write to Transport for London and the London Assembly regarding the cost of telephoning transport operators), members noted that this issue should remain in the workplan as there was a concern that, while it may be acceptable to charge customers for the provision of information, customers should not be charged for making a complaint.

Action: Committee Services

5 Actions Taken (CA056)

The Chief Executive reported that the meeting with Passenger Focus scheduled for 21 July 2010 had been postponed and would be rearranged shortly.

Members discussed the meeting on 30 July 2010 with Transport for London about Oyster ticketing issues. Members noted that the Casework team had identified an issue about Oyster ticketing arising from complaints (customers who had specifically avoided travelling through Zone 1 to complete their journey were being charged as though they had gone into Zone 1) and had raised it with TfL. This was highlighted as an example of the value that London TravelWatch offered in its ability to identify issues, interpret them and respond quickly.

The Chief Executive reported that the meeting with Eurostar scheduled for 30 July 2010 had been rescheduled for October but that the informal meeting with Seth Williams on 26 August 2010 had taken place.

Members noted that many meetings had taken place between London TravelWatch and national rail operators. The Casework Manager reported that problems often occurred in relation to Oyster card usage at Network Rail stations. Members agreed that this was an example of the importance of maintaining a direct link between Oyster and the national rail operators.

6 Casework report (CA057)

The Director, Public Liaison, reported that the Casework Report reflected the period between April and June 2010, during which time staff had still been getting used to the new database but that the figures overall were very positive. He highlighted the following points:

- Most acknowledgements were now issued on the same day
- The focus was now on ensuring that referrals are made quickly – this meant working closer with colleagues in the policy team, which was viewed as a positive move – and this was the best performance on this target since 2003
- The response time from third parties was improving, especially at Transport for London
- The target for issuing final replies was improving, which was related to the improvements in issuing referrals

Members agreed that the performance report results were very encouraging and passed their formal thanks and congratulations to the casework team.

Members discussed the customer satisfaction statistics. The Director, Public Liaison, explained that these were produced on a six-monthly basis rather than quarterly. He was working to correct a software error that was preventing forms being issued automatically to complainants but in the meantime forms were being issued manually.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

Members noted that the largest number of appeal cases related to Oyster issues. The Casework Manager reported that because there could be more than one issue per case it was possible that there may in fact be more than 50 cases that had an Oyster element. A member asked for the reference to 'TFL Oyster' in the performance report to be removed as Oyster could be used on modes other than TfL.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

7 Casework Manager's report

The Casework Manager reported that for the most recent two-week period there had been 100% compliance with Target 2 and for the most recent one-week period there had been 100% compliance with Target 4. She noted that the summer holiday period was a quiet one for complaints but nonetheless would hope to see consistent results in the high 90s.

The Casework Manager reported that she had visited Passenger Focus with the Director, Public Liaison, and had discussed Passenger Focus's own customer satisfaction surveys. It was noted that it might be helpful to amend London TravelWatch's survey to enable easier comparison between it and Passenger Focus. It was agreed that this would be considered as part of next year's review of performance targets.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

The Casework Manager reported that one of London TravelWatch's policy officers had recently completed a secondment to the Casework team. This had proved to be a very useful initiative as it had highlighted the importance of the sharing knowledge between casework and policy.

8 Passenger Rights Project (CA058)

Members discussed the draft Passenger Rights document. Sophia Lambert stated that she had some minor proposals on the drafting that she would send through. The Chair reported on comments that David Leibling had passed to him, including comments that the charter should relate to all modes. It was agreed that comments from members would be incorporated into the charter, then following a final review by the Chair it would be published on London TravelWatch's website.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

9 Benchmarking report (CA059)

The Director, Public Liaison, explained that the report had been considered in detail during the confidential session of the previous meeting but that it was no longer confidential as the other organisations involved in the report agreed that it could now be made public.

He stated that he believed the report demonstrated how well London TravelWatch compared with the other organisations and that it could give staff and members confidence in understanding London TravelWatch's strengths, especially in relation to performance management, tracking systems and publicity.

Members discussed the issue of introducing a new performance target related to the length of time it took to close a case. It was noted that failure to meet targets that were outside the control of the Casework team could be demoralising for staff and irritating for complainants. However, it was important to keep complainants informed of progress with their case and give them some idea of when they could expect to hear from London TravelWatch. It was agreed that the Director, Public Liaison, would consider the introduction of a service standard to give informal progress updates to complainants every 15 working days, rather than introducing a target based on case closure dates.

Action: Director, Public Liaison

Members agreed the recommendations set out in sections 4.2 (Development of performance indicators for tracking outcomes received) and 4.3 (Regular meetings with companies and organisations) of the paper.

Members noted the report's positive findings in relation to London TravelWatch's cost per case, and that it compared favourably with Passenger Focus's.

Members also stressed that the report's findings were overwhelmingly positive for London TravelWatch, highlighting the value for money it offered and the high standards of service it provided.

10 Any other business

The Chief Executive noted that London TravelWatch's agendas now referred to the nearest cycle hire docking stations as an alternative means for visitors to reach the office.

11 Resolution to move into confidential session

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

In confidential session, members discussed the benchmarking report and an audit.

The next meeting would take place on 17 November 2010.

12 Glossary

DfT	Department for Transport
DLR	Docklands Light Railway
GLA	Greater London Authority
Ofcom	Media and communications regulator
ORR	Office of the Rail Regulator
TfL	Transport for London
TOCs	Train Operating Companies