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## Executive Minutes

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Agenda item : 5b  
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Minutes of a meeting of the London TravelWatch Executive Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 22 April 2010, 2.10 – 4.25 pm

Present:

Sharon Grant (SG)                      Chair

David Barry (DB)

Gail Engert (GE)

David Leibling (DL)

Lorna Reith (LR)

Janet Cooke (JC)

Patti Tobin (PT)

Peter Ellis (PE)

Chief Executive

Director, Finance & Personnel

Senior Finance Officer (minute 5)

### 1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

### 2. Minutes of meeting held on 18 March 2010

Subject to a couple of minor amendments these were approved.

### 3. Matters arising

**Minutes of meeting held on 18 February 2010** - The amended minutes would be circulated by email and the minutes signed off at the next meeting.                      **SG**

**Database of local issues** – GE queried whether the business plan objective in respect of member contact with political borough transport leads had been met. JC replied that although there may not have been an actual meeting in every case, each of them had been contacted and comprehensive details of issues for passengers in each London borough had been collected during the year to help raise awareness for link members. It was agreed that a lot of work had been put into progressing this item and it was important that this momentum continued next year. A letter would be sent in June once it was known who would be the political leads following the local elections.                      **JC**

**TfL Communications** – JC confirmed that a meeting had been organised to discuss arrangements for our involvement in chairing TfL's stakeholder meetings to consult on

arrangements for the Northern Line closures. Members reiterated that it was important for London TravelWatch to also make its own arrangements to seek the views of passengers on whether they would prefer a long block closure rather than shorter closures spread over a much longer period. However, SG noted that this was a complex subject and it might not always be possible for contractors to take full advantage of a long closure in which case passengers would be inconvenienced unnecessarily. LR pointed out that weekend closures did not impact on commuters and that London Underground had shown flexibility previously when big events were planned at weekends. A detailed communications plan would be drawn up after the meeting with TfL but in the meantime JC agreed to investigate what mechanisms were available for the public to give us feedback electronically. **JC**

#### **4. Chair's update**

SG announced that, due to continuing pressures of work, Sara Pond had resigned as Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee although she would continue to be involved as a member. David Barry, who was the Deputy Chair currently, had agreed to stand as Chair. The Executive Group endorsed this proposal and SG would recommend this to the Board at its next meeting. **SG**

SG also confirmed that Kevin Davis had been nominated as a parliamentary candidate on 16 April and, as required, had immediately stood down as a member of the Board of London TravelWatch. The matter of recruitment to fill existing vacancies as well as those that would arise at the end of the year when several members reached the end of their term of office would be raised with City Hall after the elections. **JC**

SG reported that her annual performance appraisal with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee had taken place recently, in the course of which she had raised various issues concerning the independence of London TravelWatch.

**South London Line** – the work under way currently to explore different options could not be published until after the elections, as a result TfL's next stakeholder meeting would not take place until the end of May. SG said she hoped that ultimately there would be a much better outcome for local passengers than would otherwise have been the case as a result of the hard work put in by London TravelWatch on this, particularly the Director, Research and Development.

**Freedom of Information requests** – JC was asked to set up a mechanism to alert members of the Executive Group when such requests were received. **JC**

In advance of her appraisal SG had asked for the latest performance figures from the Director, Public Liaison and advised members that there had been a slight dip in the percentage of cases acknowledged within five working days and a slight increase in the percentage of cases referred on to operators within five working days, there had also been a big increase in the volume of work during the last quarter. She asked that the performance figures be copied to the rest of the Executive. **JC**

Concern was expressed that there were still some problems with the new casework monitoring system which meant it was not yet possible to produce accurate management reports without manual auditing. JC explained that this problem had arisen because caseworkers had not always been recording activity in the manner

required by the new system which meant that key milestone dates were not picked up automatically. The casework team had been made aware of the need to record key dates in the appropriate fields and some additional programming had been done to make more fields mandatory.

It was noted that the results of the exercise to benchmark London TravelWatch casework activity against four other comparable organisations should be available at the May meeting of the Consumer Affairs Committee.

## **5. Finance report and accounts March 2010**

PE introduced his report pointing out that, whilst the figures were still subject to audit, the year end position was an almost break even budget, a slight overspend of less than 0.5%. As previously noted financial forecasting throughout the year had been much more accurate than previously. PE was congratulated on this result.

Members also reviewed details of expenditure against the £65,700 brought forward from 2008-09 as a reserve earmarked for the purposes of completing the work arising from the Chief Executive's review of the organisation (£50,000) as well as to complete the outstanding training programme. It was noted that expenditure to support the Chief Executive's review had been used to commission an internal management development programme, for work arising from the review of casework handling, and to enable better use of accommodation.

It was not proposed that any of the reserves should be earmarked for a particular purpose in 2010-11.

PE tabled a sample of the new simpler format he proposed to use when presenting monthly accounts to the Executive for 2010-11, members agreed this was much clearer.

## **6. Chief Executive's report**

JC introduced her report by pointing out a number of factors that had contributed to an increase in workload over the past month, particularly for senior staff. PT gave a summary of unexpected externally generated work which had arisen for her because of the knock-on impact of changing structures within other public sector bodies, particularly in respect of pensions.

In respect of the review currently underway by the London Assembly, JC summarised the work which had been undertaken to date by officers of the GLA to better understand the work which London TravelWatch had a statutory responsibility to undertake and how staff resources were deployed in support of this. She was asked to keep a note of the time impact this additional work was having on the organisation. **JC**

PT gave a brief update on the work underway to manage sick absence.

## **7. Board issues –**

- a) **Changes to meeting dates** - The meetings of the Access to Transport Committee and the Fares and Ticketing Committee scheduled for April had been cancelled as their intended agendas might be construed as political in the pre-election period. The informal Board briefing scheduled for the end of April had been deferred as a number of apologies had been received and this would now be held in mid-May.
- b) **Forthcoming Board meetings** – SG confirmed that the May meeting would be held at City Hall and would have a research theme. The results of several key pieces of research undertaken in 2009-10 would be available at the meeting including our survey of bus passenger priorities in London. The Transport Commissioner, Peter Hendy, would be attending. The July meeting would look particularly at the impact of the 2012 Olympics on passengers in and around London.
- c) **Key issues arising from committee meetings** – DL reported the successful resolution to the issue about tickets to “London international” that had been raised at the March Fares and Ticketing Committee meeting. ATOC had recently confirmed that through train tickets via London Underground will be reinstated from May 23 when the new timetable comes into effect.
- d) **Local work** – GE asked that link members be made aware of any local meetings which were attended by officers.

**JC**

#### **8. Any other business –**

- a) **Member appraisals** – SG confirmed that she was setting up a programme, DL reported that he had recently had his Passenger Focus appraisal.
- b) **Future Jobs Fund** – SG suggested it might be possible to recruit job seekers to work on six month placements at no financial cost to London TravelWatch. PT agreed to investigate this further.

**PT**

**JC / 13.5.10**