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## Minutes

Agenda item: 2  
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### Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 25 October 2016

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#### Present

##### Members

Richard Dilks (from Item 9) , Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke, Abdikafi Rage

##### In attendance

Michele Dix

##### Secretariat

Keletha Barrett	Policy Officer (KB)
Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Officer
Susan James	Casework Manager
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant
Robert Nichols	Policy Officer (RN)

#### Minutes

##### 1 **Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**

Stephen Locke reported that John Stewart was unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that Stephen Locke, Chair of London TravelWatch, would chair the meeting in John Stewart's absence. Stephen Locke welcomed those present to the meeting and made the standard safety announcements.

## **2 Apologies for absence**

In addition to John Stewart, apologies for absence were received from Chris Brown and the Chief Executive. Richard Dilks had sent apologies for his anticipated lateness.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest in addition to the standing declarations available on London TravelWatch's website.

## **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the Policy committee on 28 June 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to amending Passenger Focus to Transport Focus in Item 3.

## **5 Matters arising (PC098)**

Members noted that officers continued to press for improved National Rail performance information in order to hold train operating companies to account.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the Policy Officer (VS) would update members at a future meeting on bus and cycle safety.

### **Action: Policy Officer (VS)**

Officers said that, with the Chair of London TravelWatch, they raised Southern Rail's poor performance with Paul Maynard MP, the Rail Minister, who fully shared our concerns. The planned meeting with Lord Ahmad had been postponed. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that Mr Maynard had quoted London TravelWatch's report on surface transport access to airports during a Westminster Hall debate when discussing why southern rail access to Heathrow Airport was important.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that there had been useful meetings with Chris Gibb, who was conducting a review for the government on the performance of Southern Rail. Mr Gibb had been receptive to many of London TravelWatch's comments and said he would make use of them when putting together his findings.

On rail devolution, the London TravelWatch Chair said he had written to Chris Grayling MP to set out London TravelWatch's position. He had not yet received a reply.

Members noted that the report on small stations had been delayed due to staff absences and looked forward to its publication in due course.

## **6 Key activities**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, explained that the alliance board between Network Rail and Govia Thameslink Railway was an arrangement that allowed train operators and Network Rail to agree a series of operational matters for running the route as a whole. London TravelWatch's contribution was regarded as important by participants because the organisation's clear remit ensured that discussions focussed on the needs of passengers.

Stephen Locke said that the introductory meeting with Paul Maynard MP had been very productive and the minister had seemed to share many of London TravelWatch's concerns, particularly on compensation for poor performance.

## **7 Crossrail 2**

Stephen Locke welcomed Michele Dix CBE, Managing Director of Crossrail 2, to the meeting.

Ms Dix gave a presentation on Crossrail 2, focusing on its potential to connect homes with jobs and opportunities. She said that Crossrail 2 was a response to challenges of population and employment growth and would enable large numbers of people to reach central London, a key element in maintaining the UK's economic competitiveness.

Introduction of Crossrail 2 would present the opportunity to address congestion on the National Rail network, including along the corridor into Waterloo station, and the whole of the Underground network. Improvements to the rail network alone would not be enough to ease congestion, as the capacity of the terminal stations was limited. New infrastructure such as Crossrail 2 was needed.

Ms Dix noted that Crossrail 2 would enable new housing development in the Upper Lea Valley and would contribute to agglomeration benefits arising from concentration of economic activity in central London.

The core route of Crossrail 2 ran between Wimbledon and Tottenham Hale. It had first been identified in 1974 (as the Chelsea-Hackney line) and was adopted for Crossrail 2 following a five-year review. The operation of Crossrail 2 would lead to improved journey times across the south east and would also increase accessibility as the whole route would be step-free. It would also alleviate congestion across the whole network including mainline terminals. There would be 30 trains per hour between Wimbledon and Dalston Junction, with 15 trains per hour continuing to Tottenham Hale and New Southgate.

Ms Dix said the introduction of Crossrail 2 could lead to the development of 200,000 new homes, in addition to supporting new jobs in central London. Crossrail 2 had the support of the National Infrastructure Commission and funding had been agreed to develop a hybrid Bill during the course of this Parliament.

The Crossrail 2 proposals had been subject to extensive public consultation and received a good level of support. The scheme had been refined to address concerns, and also to improve the business case by improving affordability. Ms Dix noted that London would need to contribute 50% of the costs of the scheme and

that the private sector should also be involved. The funding agreement and housing delivery plan should be in place before the hybrid bill was submitted.

It would be important for Crossrail 2 to have good interchanges as this improved the overall business case. The planners were aiming to minimise walking distances at interchanges wherever possible, subject to restrictions such as provision of circulation space. In response to a question, she said that guidelines included maximum walking distances before travellers should be provided but the focus was on reducing the amount of walking needed.

Crossrail 2 would see improved access to Stansted Airport, and with connections at Tottenham Court Road and Victoria stations would also, respectively, improve access to Heathrow and Gatwick Airports.

Ms Dix said that the part of the scheme that would involve the building of new tracks and rebuilding of stations would be very expensive and very disruptive. Detailed consultation on how to undertake these works would need to take place.

Approval was needed from the Secretary of State and Mayor of London, which Ms Dix hoped to achieve by March 2017, with the aim of submitting the bill in 2019. This would enable operation to begin in the early 2030s.

In response to questions, Ms Dix said that many lessons had been learnt following the planning of Crossrail 1, including in relation to planning of growth opportunities and in preparing the business case. She said that work on Crossrail 1 had been smooth to date and this gave people confidence in the workability of the proposals for Crossrail 2.

Ms Dix said that London would still grow despite the exit from the European Union, although there would be competition for investment from other parts of the country which emphasised the need for London to provide a proportion of the funding.

She said that there was cross-party support for Crossrail 2 and she hoped the recent change of government would not undermine that position. She noted that the scheme would provide revenues such as from increased stamp duty, and she hoped that this would be recognised in the cost assessments.

Ms Dix said she assumed the model of operation would be similar to that of Crossrail 1, with devolution to Transport for London, travelcard acceptance and Mayoral oversight. She said there was strong support for Crossrail 2 from county councils around London because of the benefits for longer-distance commuters.

The Chair of the meeting noted that the timescales were lengthy given that the project was first raised decades ago. Ms Dix said that the objective of tabling the hybrid bill during this Parliament was to make progress with the timescale but resolving funding and affordability remained critical. The early 2030s was absolutely the earliest possible operational date.

Members noted that operational problems with the Thameslink upgrade had caused significant disruption for passengers and dented confidence in their deliverability. Ms Dix said that there would be a huge amount of passenger communication in relation to the implementation of Crossrail 2 and that passenger needs would be at the heart of decisions. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that Thameslink had experienced problems because not enough attention

was paid to knock-on impacts of works on other parts of the network and it would be important to avoid this for Crossrail 2.

Stephen Locke thanked Ms Dix for attending and offered London TravelWatch's assistance in gaining support for the proposals.

## **8 Transport strategy (PC100)**

The Director, Policy and Investigation, presented a report on potential transport infrastructure projects for London. The report was an update on the version that had been published two years ago.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, outlined some of the key projects contained in the report. He said that improvements to Chiltern Metro services would increase provision to one of the least well served networks in London, which could lead to growth in housing and access to employment as well as possible improvements to the interchange at West Hampstead.

The proposal to link Great Northern services into Cannon Street with Southern services into London Bridge would remove some of the inefficiencies caused by the need to turn around terminating trains, as well as improving cross-river routes. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that re-signalling the South London rail routes could result in much more frequent services.

Members agreed that the report provided much useful information about projects that could be taken forward in the medium to longer term. It was agreed that the report should be circulated to the Department for Transport, the National Infrastructure Commission and the Mayor's office.

### **Action: Director, Policy and Investigation**

It was noted that the projects were largely focused on heavy rail, as this was the mode that could benefit from the greatest impact. The projects demonstrated how London TravelWatch's priorities for transport users could be realised, with a focus on sustained investment.

Members considered the likely content of the forthcoming Mayor's Transport Strategy and noted that it did not appear to conflict with London TravelWatch's own objectives.

## **9 National Rail performance report (PC101)**

The Policy Officer (KB) presented London TravelWatch's report on National Rail performance, the format of which had been updated to reflect members' comments. The introduction had been fully reviewed to improve its style and increase its accessibility.

The Policy Officer (KB) said that the weather had affected rail performance across the network during the period under review. The performance of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) had been particularly poor and this had had a knock-on impact on many other routes. GTR was the worst performer in each area of the report and all the individual parts of its franchise were poor.

The Policy Officer (KB) said that the measure on crowding was new and replaced the old measure of 'passengers in excess of capacity'. Officers were still considering how best to analyse this data.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he had recently met senior officers of Chiltern who said that their patronage was down and they blamed GTR's performance for damaging confidence in the industry across the board. This was despite there being no interconnection between the Chiltern and GTR networks.

Members agreed that GTR's performance was unacceptable and expressed disappointment with the continued position. It would be useful to conduct some analysis of the problems it was experiencing, including the causes and responsibilities, while remaining sensitive to the high profile nature of the issue.

It was agreed that the report would benefit by the addition of more information in the introduction about how the information within it contributed to London TravelWatch's policy work. In addition, more information could be included about the cause of the problems described, without appearing to endorse the relevant operators' apologies or explanations. It was agreed that the report would be updated on these lines and published.

**Action: Policy Officer (KB)**

#### **10 Transport for London performance report (PC102)**

The Policy Officer (KB) presented London TravelWatch's report on the performance of Transport for London. She said that journey time reliability had declined over the period, which showed that the speed of traffic on the roads was reducing. Members noted that this was having an impact on bus performance, with 142 out of 234 high-speed routes performing below their contracted target. This was of significant concern.

Members noted that the targets for highway condition had recently been relaxed so it should be easier for TfL to meet them. The targets should not be relaxed again on this basis.

Members discussed performance in relation to pavement obstructions. It was agreed that the report should be clearer about how the assessments were made and that the definitions should change to 'appear clear' rather than 'are clear'.

**Action: Policy Officer (VS)**

#### **11 Casework performance report (PC103)**

The Casework Manager presented a report on casework performance for the period April to September 2016. She said that the first half of the period had been incredibly busy and staff had needed to work very hard to cope with the volume of complaints. However, casework was now heading back to more normal levels.

The Casework Manager said that both Network Rail and TfL had reduced the amount of time it took to respond to cases. There had been a problem with London

Overground but cases were now being handled by the central TfL team which should alleviate this.

She said that the Heathrow Express app contained incorrect information but the operator said it would be too expensive to change so its customer services team was dealing with individual issues as they arose. She would be looking into this again in future.

The Casework Manager said that Eurostar had caused complaints because it had introduced a new configuration of trains which led to seat reservations not matching seats on the train. Passengers were seeking refunds but were not contractually entitled to them.

The Casework Manager said that it was currently difficult for passengers to complain about TfL modes via mobile phones or tablets and it was agreed that this needed to be addressed as a priority. She was also concerned that complaints at TfL were not reaching people responsible for improving the customer experience. It was agreed that these issues would be raised at the next meeting with senior TfL customer service staff.

**Action: Casework Manager**

Members questioned whether the volumes of casework were sustainable. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the Office of Rail and Road was pushing hard to ensure that London TravelWatch's details were included on complaint correspondence and that London TravelWatch currently had higher visibility via the compensation agenda, which were together contributing to higher volumes of complaints. If the volumes continued, the issue of resourcing would be brought to the Governance Committee.

**12 Any other business**

There was no other business.

**13 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 reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting.