
Confidential Minutes

Agenda item: 15
Drafted: 22.03.18

Confidential minutes of the Policy Committee held on 19 March 2019 at Europoint, 5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

These minutes are in addition to the public minutes of a meeting of the Board on the same date. The Board 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 the public interest that the public should be excluded for this part of the meeting.

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1. Confidential minutes and matters arising
2. Potential risks
3. Meeting review

Present

Members

Jackie Ballard, Arthur Leathley (Chair), Karen McArthur, Abdi Osman

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger

Director, Policy & Investigation

Janet Cooke

Chief Executive

Richard Freeston-Clough

Operations and Communications Manager

Luke Muskett

Committee and Public Liaison Officer

1 Confidential minutes, declarations of interest and matters arising

The confidential minutes of the Policy committee held on 11 December 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising or additional declarations of interest.

2 Potential risks

The were no particular risks to come out of the meeting.

3 Meeting review

A member said she had noticed staff had allowed members to ask questions to Mr Mellors first before asking questions themselves, and thanked them for doing so. She asked that actions be included in the confidential minutes so that similar suggestions were recorded. The Director, Policy and Investigation stated that he felt the meeting had been handled well. He remarked that a gentleman sitting in the audience was the DfT's franchise manager for South Western Railway and it was positive that he had come along to the meeting.

A member asked whether it was true that South Western Railway was performing worse when compared to the previous franchisee. The Director, Policy and Investigation confirmed that they were. He added that one area that they had not covered was delays that were under five minutes, which the company currently did not investigate. The member asked whether the takeover of the franchise had been an easy thing to do. The Director, Policy and Investigation replied that in theory it should be, though in practice what often tended to happen was that the best staff that had previously worked for the operator would move across to another company within the same group. The Chief Executive said that South Western Railway had not been helped by the timing of the change over, which coincided with major engineering works taking place at Waterloo station.

A member asked whether international rail operators experienced the same problem with regards to adverse weather. The Chair replied that the UK was special with regards to leaves on the lines, as it had particular types of trees that shed large amounts of leaves each autumn. There was also the problem that many of the trees were situated close to the railway track, which was not the case in many other countries.

The Chair commented that although other countries experienced much more extreme weather compared to the UK, these countries spent a much higher amount of money in preparation for it. He said that there had to be a judgement call made between putting up with a few days of disruption at particularly periods of the year or spending far higher amounts of money to prevent such disruptions.

The Director, Policy and Investigation commented that with regard to leaves on the line, Network Rail had recently undergone a controversial policy of cutting down trees situated close to the railway line to pre-emptively reduce the risk of leaves and branches causing disruption. The Chief Executive added the policy often got a lot of resistance from residents who disliked trees being removed or excessively cutback. The Chair thanked those present for their time and closed the meeting.