
Minutes

Agenda item: 2
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Minutes of the Policy Committee meeting held on 28 June 2016

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Present

Members

Chris Brown, Richard Dilks , Glyn Kyle, Stephen Locke, Abdikafi Rage, John Stewart (Chair), Ruth Thompson

Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy & Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
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

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and made standard safety announcements.

2 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3 Declarations of interest

Stephen Locke reminded the meeting that part of his work on the Board of Passenger Focus involved the review of the National Rail Passenger Survey and that this included issues relating to small stations. London TravelWatch's report on small stations would be discussed during the confidential part of the meeting. Mr Locke said he did not believe his interest would prevent him from taking part in the discussion on small stations.

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

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Policy committee on 23 February 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The notes of the visit to Canary Wharf and Abbey Wood were received. It was noted that under point 2, about the Canary Wharf station visit, concerns related to the overall size of the station given the expected number of passengers, not just the reduced height. On point 4, about the visit to Thamesmead, it was noted that members were principally concerned about the lack of thought given to the interchange and its use as a rail head. It was agreed that officers would raise this with relevant officers at Transport for London (TfL).

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

5 Matters arising (PC091)

The Chief Executive said that work on the passenger feedback questionnaire was on hold as the current priority was getting frontline casework activity back on track following recent high levels of demand.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that Network Rail had begun to disaggregate Govia Thameslink Railway's (GTR) performance information but only for all-day statistics, not peak and off-peak. It had not been possible to include this disaggregated data in the current National Rail performance report.

Members remained concerned about the lack of disaggregated peak-hours data. It was noted that the Department for Transport had recognised that the franchise was too large and that it would be useful to have data at a smaller level. A meeting was due to be held with GTR shortly and officers would raise this issue there.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

It was agreed that officers would report to the Governance committee on the impact of the changed approach to call handling in the office, which had been designed to reduce disruption to the casework team.

Action: Executive Assistant

6 Key activities (PC092)

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the passenger forum at Waterloo station was an opportunity for passengers to meet staff at South West Trains and raise their concerns. Several topics were raised, with many people asking to be able to buy tickets from other stations at South West Trains ticket machines. Officers found such events useful as a means of informing London TravelWatch's evidence on franchises.

It was noted that Network Rail had published a study about southern rail access to Heathrow Airport but it seemed unlikely to make any firm decisions until the decision on Heathrow's third runway was made. London TravelWatch supported the southern rail route regardless of the third runway and this would be raised in a forthcoming meeting with the Department for Transport.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the meeting with GTR and Southeastern about the 2018 timetable had been productive and the operators appeared to have incorporated many of London TravelWatch's aspirations. He welcomed the operators' early discussions with London TravelWatch and noted that the public consultation would be published shortly.

Members extended congratulations to Ruth Thompson for her work on the London Assembly scrutiny relating to the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street. It was noted that London TravelWatch had called for TfL to discuss proposed bus changes informally in advance of the statutory consultation.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that there had been no real improvement in the provision of performance data by TfL. He would continue to press for TfL to publish a timetable of dates for the release of data and this may be something worth raising at the forthcoming meeting with Val Shawcross, the Deputy Mayor for Transport.

7 Rail franchising update (PC093)

The Chief Executive reported that the DfT had acknowledged London TravelWatch's contribution to the franchising process on behalf of passengers.

She said that there were real concerns that the progress with rail devolution was stalling and that this had been discussed with the Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee.

Members discussed what more could be done to encourage improved performance in the GTR franchise. It was noted that their performance targets had been relaxed twice since the franchise was awarded but were still not being met. Members were keen to find out from GTR what plans were in place to deal with its industrial relations problems and its poor performance.

Members noted that it was important to look critically at the reasons given by GTR for its poor performance and not to accept all its explanations at face value. Some of the problems had been caused by factors within its control. The poor performance of the network was having serious negative impacts on the lives of

many passengers. It was agreed that officers would give consideration to means of progressing discussions with GTR.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

Members agreed that the lack of progress with devolution was worrying and agreed that this should be revisited after the summer break.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

8 National Rail performance report (PC095)

Officers noted that the National Rail performance report was London TravelWatch's own analysis of rail performance, not simply a presentation of train operators' views. The report gave information about performance from the perspective of London rail users, which was not available anywhere else. This could be made clearer in the text of the report.

It was noted that the Chiltern figures were difficult to compare with other operators' because of inconsistencies in reporting. This should be highlighted in the text.

It was noted that the report may benefit from more information about London TravelWatch's response to the performance issues identified in it.

Action: Policy Officer (KB)

9 Transport for London performance report (PC096)

The Policy Officer said that the performance report had only been updated in part, as a result of the delay in obtaining performance data from Transport for London. The main area of interest was the data on bus performance.

Members commented on the findings and on the presentation of the performance report. The Policy Officer said the report would be updated with missing data and circulated to members.

Action: Policy Officer (VS)

10 Update on Interchange Matters event (PC097)

The Communications Officer reported on the recent Interchange Matters seminar that London TravelWatch hosted. He said it had been a successful event with speakers giving useful and engaging presentations on various interchange issues.

It was noted that the new interchange Old Oak Common was not yet configured in the best interests of passengers. It was agreed that London TravelWatch would write to the Chief Executive of the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation to call for improvements to the interchange, with copies to be sent to local MPs, Assembly Members and the Deputy Mayor for Transport.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

It was agreed that there were many issues relating to interchange still to be discussed and a follow-up event would be useful. The objectives would be to focus attention on this overlooked area and encourage interaction and debate. Officers would circulate a date for the follow-up event as soon as possible, to encourage a wide spread of attendees.

Action: Director, Policy and Investigation

11 Any other business

There was no other business.

12 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 a report on small stations and also reviewed financial or reputational risks posed by the meeting.