

# Board meeting 17.11.15



---

## Minutes

Agenda item: 4  
Drafted 03.12.15

---

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 17 November 2015 at City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA**

### Contents

- 1. Chair's introduction and pre-meeting announcements**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Declarations of interest**
- 4. Chair's activities and Transport Focus update**
- 5. Minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 September 2015 and of the Governance committee**
- 6. Matters arising (LTW509)**
- 7. Key activities (LTW510)**
- 8. Taxis and private hire vehicles (LTW511)**
- 9. Old Oak Common and Park Royal**
- 10. Any other business**
- 11. Resolution to move into confidential session**

### Present

#### Members

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

#### Guests

Helen Chapman	Transport for London (Item 8)
Darren Crowson	Transport for London (Item 8)
Faryal Velmi	Director, Transport for All (Item 8)
Michael Mulhearn	Planning Director, Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation (Item 9)
Clare Woodcock	Transport Lead, Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation (Item 9)

Hannah Holdroyd	Transport for London
-----------------	----------------------

#### Members of the public

#### Secretariat

Tim Bellenger	Director, Policy and Investigation
Janet Cooke	Chief Executive
Richard Freeston-Clough	Communications Manager
Sharon Malley	Executive Assistant (minutes)
Vincent Stops	Policy Officer (VS)

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

The Chair welcomed members and visitors to the meeting and made standard safety and evacuation announcements.

## **2 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence. Richard Dilks gave apologies in advance for his expected lateness.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

Richard Dilks declared in writing ahead of the meeting an interest in relation to the item on taxis and private hire vehicles as he had taken part in parallel discussions with Transport for London on this issue in his role as employee of London First. However, he did not believe this interest should prevent his full participation in this item and the Board agreed.

There were no other declarations of interest in addition to the standing declarations.

## **4 Chair's activities and Transport Focus update**

The Chair said that Transport Focus was continuing to work on the retender and redesign of the National Rail Passenger Survey and it would shortly publish the responses to the consultation on the changes along with a progress report about what would happen next. Also in his Transport Focus role, he had attended its November Board meeting in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, which had looked mainly at rail franchising and bus transport issues, including new approaches to bus policy based on devolution to large city regions. Transport Focus has also considered its response to the Competition and Markets Authority's review of long term competition issues in the rail sector.

As Chair of London TravelWatch he had met Fiona Twycross and Len Duvall, London Assembly members, and had held useful discussions on current transport issues and ideas for the London TravelWatch Business Plan. He had also given evidence to the Crime and Policing and Transport Committees of the Assembly, respectively on crime on public transport and on London TravelWatch's current business plan.

He had attended several meetings with Transport for London Managing Directors, and also attended TfL's Consumer Conference, which gave an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to explore how TfL could improve its customer interface. His own comments on customer needs and priorities had been included in the introductory video presented at the Conference. There was likely to be a follow-up on the good ideas and best practice that emerged.

The Chair said that he had attended meetings with user groups for the Windsor line and for the Reigate area, the latter of which was also attended by local MP Crispin Blunt. There was increasingly wide-ranging interest in, and potential support for, devolution and also demand for increased capacity and reliability.

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 September 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the word 'consider' in the first line of the final paragraph of Item 8 to the word 'understand'.

The Governance committee minutes of 18 August 2015 were noted.

## **6 Matters arising (LTW509)**

Members noted that the recent visit to Bank station had been useful and well organised. Work on a visit to Kings Cross was underway and was likely to take place following meetings in January or February 2016.

Members noted that the Policy Officer (VS) would continue to work on the issue of TfL's poor streets performance as part of his planned workload.

Members noted that the London TravelWatch Petition in response to the proposed Hybrid Bill to enable the High Speed 2 scheme had been submitted and London TravelWatch was expected to be called to the House of Commons Hybrid Bills Committee on 7 December 2015.

## **7 Key activities (LTW510)**

The Communications Manager said that the Twitter chat session on buses had been successful, with around 30-40 questions discussed and plenty of lively discussion. Most participants were well informed and TfL's promotion of the event had reached a wide audience. It was hoped that this sort of event could happen at regular future intervals in future to bolster the community engagement work.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that he had visited Aldgate with City of London planning officers to view changes since the removal of the gyratory. He thought it was now much improved. He had also visited the gyratory at Tottenham Hale and discussed options with local council officers. It was agreed that it would be useful to consider gyratories as a general transport issue at a future meeting.

### **Action: Executive Assistant**

In response to questions, the Policy Officer (VS) said that We Don't Drive was an event promoted by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) to represent the interests of people who did not drive. He had attended at CBT's invitation.

The Chief Executive said that following the meeting with Nick Baker of Tramlink she hoped to reinstate regular updates between London TravelWatch and Tramlink. She said that Mr Baker intended to look at Wimbledon and East Croydon as major interchanges in light of London TravelWatch's interchange report.

Ruth Thompson said she attended the TfL surface panel on 20 October in place of the Policy Officer (VS). It discussed various matters including taxis, the Silvertown crossing, surface congestion and bus priority.

Members asked about the south coast corridor study. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that this was a study commissioned by the Treasury to look at options to improve capacity between London and Brighton. He expected a response to the study in the next few months.

Members noted that Southeastern had been experiencing significant disruption recently, which appeared to have been caused by the adoption of a policy of running reduced services in anticipation of problems caused by adverse weather or windfall

regardless of whether the reductions were actually needed. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that he expressed his and passengers' frustration with the current situation and noted that the Southeastern website gave a lot of information about planned future disruption but nothing about the cause of disruption happening now.

The Chair noted that the Office of Rail and Road's new complaints handling guidance meant London TravelWatch was now in a strong position to negotiate a protocol with each individual operator on the handling of cases, and indeed there was an expectation that this would be done. Any operator failing to meet an agreed protocol could then be referred back to ORR for appropriate regulatory action. The Director, Policy and Investigation, said it had been a very productive meeting and he had responded to the ORR with London TravelWatch's position. In addition, the Director, Policy and Investigation, had given the ORR an example of how transport operators should mention London TravelWatch on their websites. He said that the London TravelWatch Casework Manager had visited her counterpart in Transport Focus to ensure a consistent approach in this area. The Board agreed that London TravelWatch should work as closely as possible in parallel with Transport Focus in developing this initiative.

The Director, Policy and Investigation, said that the meeting with Camden Council on Euston and the High Speed 2 proposals had been useful as Camden was able to share information that enabled London TravelWatch's position to be much stronger.

## **8 Taxis and private hire vehicles (LTW511)**

The Policy Officer (VS) introduced Helen Chapman and Darren Crowson from Transport for London and Faryal Velmi from Transport for All and presented his report on taxis and private hire vehicles. He said it was important to hear from Ms Velmi because of the particular importance of taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) to those with mobility impairments.

The Policy Officer (VS) presented a report covering some of the current issues in respect of taxis and PHVs. He said that London TravelWatch was calling for a notice on the partition of black cabs showing a photo of the driver and giving details of how to complain to TfL in the event of problems. Mr Crowson said that the fare card on the door did include information on channels of complaint. Members noted that London TravelWatch wanted the information to be on the partition so it would be more visible to passengers and had been seeking this for some time. Ms Chapman said that this would need to be consulted on and would be wrapped in a wider consultation exercise. However, it was something she planned to look at again in the latter part of 2016.

In relation to complaints about PHVs, Ms Chapman said that the current position was for all complaints to be channelled through the operator in the first instance. However, ideally complaints about driver behaviour or the standard of the vehicle would be directed to TfL while complaints about lateness or problems with the account would go to the operator. Ms Chapman recognised that this might be confusing for the customer.

Ms Chapman said that TfL was considering trialling a driver identification scheme for PHVs. She said that customers were keen that the driver ID should be visible from outside the vehicle and include a photo, so the trial would accommodate this.

Ms Chapman said that the consultation on PHV regulation was still open. She said that unlike black cabs, PHVs needed to be pre-booked and could not be hailed on the street. PHVs typically set their fares by distance but app-based models, which took account of demand at particular times, were increasingly challenging this. Both PHV and black cab drivers were already subject to background and health checks before being issued licenses.

Ms Chapman said that some of the issues under consideration in the PHV review included topographical knowledge, English language skills, the ability of TfL to take license-related complaints, and disability awareness training for PHV drivers.

Ms Chapman outlined proposed changes to PHV bookings. One proposal was to introduce a mandatory five-minute wait between the booking and the pick-up, to allow drivers time to plan routes and to prevent customers from running across roads to try to find their taxi.

Other issues for consideration were whether all PHV companies should offer the facility to make bookings at least a week in advance and whether fares should be specified prior to the PHV driver accepting the booking and the main destination recorded.

Ms Chapman noted that apps could now display the location of available PHVs, which allowed customers to know where they were as they made their booking. This blurred the distinction between PHVs and black cabs as PHVs were not permitted to be hailed from the street. One proposal under consideration would prevent apps from showing the location of available PHVs. Ms Chapman said this and the five-minute waiting period were the most controversial parts of the proposals.

Members noted that these proposals may be seen to limit passenger choice and reduce the ability of passengers to gain control over the journey. Imposing the five-minute wait would be frustrating, especially in parts of outer London where there were no black cabs. There would also be significant customer annoyance where a journey was urgent and the PHVs were parked at PHV offices and immediately available to passengers. Members noted that the real problem facing TfL was the need to maintain the distinction, which technology was increasingly blurring, between black cabs and PHVs.

Members asked how passengers would be aware of their new rights following the review. Ms Chapman said that there would be a major consumer campaign but she did not yet know exactly how that would look.

Ms Chapman said there were other proposals including an English language test and a requirement for drivers to work for only one operator at a time. Ms Chapman said this might bring passenger safety benefits in reducing the number of hours drivers worked. However, members noted that there were no proposed limits on hours and nothing to prevent drivers from working a large number of hours for a single operator. Ms Chapman said that TfL was currently undertaking a regulatory impact assessment on this issue.

Ms Chapman said that PHV drivers were currently required to carry insurance from the time of booking. The proposals would introduce a requirement to carry insurance for the period of the license.

Ms Velmi, from Transport for All, said she welcomed this spotlight on the taxi and PHV industry. She said that the industry was in flux and it was important to use this opportunity to consider physical accessibility of taxis and PHVs and to consider how to make the industry work for all users. Transport for All would be submitting a formal consultation response and would raise an issue omitted from the consultation, about the dearth of wheelchair-accessible PHVs. Ms Velmi noted that the London Assembly report on this taxis and PHVs included a recommendation on accessibility.

Ms Velmi said that that lack of accessible PHVs meant many disabled people did not have access to PHVs or may be charged more to use them, even though this was discriminatory. Other authorities had used initiatives such as waiving the licence fee for accessible PHVs to encourage their use.

Ms Velmi said that drivers should be given disability equality training, which focused on the concept of people being disabled by barriers imposed by society and what organisations could do to remove the barriers and change attitudes. Ms Chapman said that TfL was adapting the disability equality training currently used for Dial a Ride drivers to be suitable for PHV drivers.

Ms Velmi said it was important for training to be delivered by someone with a disability, to give the PHV drivers confidence in speaking to and handling disabled people. She wanted TfL to come up with innovative incentives to improve accessibility.

Ms Chapman said that the London Assembly scrutiny of taxis and PHVs had proposed a minimum of 25% of all PHVs to be accessible. But this was difficult to enforce in practice as the majority of vehicles were licensed individually and not as part of a fleet. The PHV industry had argued that there was little demand for accessible vehicles, although this might be because potential users were aware of the limited availability and did not bother to ask for them.

The Policy Officer (VS) said that the Law Commission suggested a minimum percentage of accessible vehicles for larger operators, which would address the fleet problem. Mr Crowson said that TfL planned to undertake research among disabled PHV and taxi users to find out their aspirations for these services and what would make an ideal journey.

Ms Velmi said Transport for All would like to see some progress in this area, with equality of access being resolved. This would also bring benefits to the general population, which was aging, and it was important that TfL planned for this. Members noted that this review was unlikely to be repeated for some time so it was important to ensure that issues such as accessibility were addressed.

Ms Chapman said that the review included a requirement for customers to be able to contact operators by phone. Members noted that this was particularly important when the operator had access to customer bank details may be providing services needed in an emergency. It was important for TfL to be strong on this. Ms Chapman said it would be helpful if London TravelWatch's consultation response could be forceful on this point.

On the issue of black cabs accepting credit and debit card payments, members said that there was some impatience at the time taken to make progress. Ms Chapman said that the TfL board would be considering a report on card payments for black cabs next year, which would require all cabs to accept card payment. There would

be no proposal for restricting the ability for people to pay by cash. Ms Chapman said that black cab drivers currently charged a fee of 10% of the fare or £1, whichever was greater, although they were restricted by regulations to charging only enough to cover the cost of processing the payment. Members were concerned that this was very poor value for passengers and Ms Chapman said that the proposal would aim to bring the surcharge down considerably. Members noted that the surcharge for credit and debit cards was the same although the actual cost of processing debit payments was much lower and said that TfL should act strongly on this to bring the surcharge in line with the rest of the payments industry, or do away with it as was the norm in much of the retail sector.

Ms Chapman said that there had been a considerable increase in the number of PHVs in London, with around 2,000 new licences per month.

Ms Chapman said she would send a note on progress with implementing the London Assembly's recommendations following the meeting.

**Action: Executive Assistant**

In relation to pedicabs, Ms Chapman said that TfL had been calling for greater powers to regulate and enforce in this area but at present they were not within TfL's remit.

It was agreed that London TravelWatch had strong support for consumer protection measures, such as in relation to the card payment surcharge and the proposed requirement for PHV operators to have phone contact details, but some proposals appeared to interfere between the consumer and provider, and did not appear to benefit the user. It was agreed that the Policy Officer (VS) would draft a response and send it to members and that it would be considered further at the December meeting of the Policy committee.

**Action: Policy Officer (VS)**

## **9 Old Oak Common and Park Royal**

The Chair welcomed Michael Mulhearn and Clare Woodcock from the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation to the meeting. Mr Mulhearn, Planning Director, gave a presentation on the current position in relation to proposals for the Old Oak Common and Park Royal development sites in relation to the potential new High Speed 2 stations.

Mr Mulhearn said that the development corporation covered a site that included the new High Speed 2 station and it aspired to strong regeneration through excellent station design. The site also included the Park Royal industrial estate as it was important that regeneration decisions were made with full awareness of the impact on Park Royal.

The development corporation had planning powers across the site and also compulsory purchase powers. Plans were underway to establish the layout of the site and how to join together stations, bus network and other transport facilities.

Members offered to assist where appropriate in relation to priorities for transport users. It was noted that the development was not dependent on HS2 going ahead.

The Chief Executive said that it would be important to include a London TravelWatch representative on the transport panel to ensure that the passenger voice was heard. Mr Mulhearn said that decisions on panel memberships were decided by the board and London TravelWatch should write to the Chief Executive of the development corporation with proposals.

**Action: Chief Executive**

Mr Mulhearn said that the current plans would see a single integrated station for the West Coast Main Line, High Speed 2 and Crossrail services, with two further separate stations on the site for London Overground, one going to Richmond and the other to Clapham Junction. Members said it would be important to work with TfL to ensure the walking routes between the Overground stations and the single integrated station were as good as possible.

Mr Mulhearn said that around 70-80% of Park Royal employees drove to work, although they generally lived within a relatively short distance of the site. The development corporation was hoping to improve public transport links in the area.

Members asked how existing stations would be improved and Mr Mulhearn said that they would have improved access arrangements and increased capacity. In response to a question, Mr Mulhearn said that if Wormwood Scrubs prison were to be redeveloped as housing it would permit better connections to White City and other locations.

The Chair of the West London Line user group spoke from the floor and noted that there were no current proposals for direct interchange connection between Govia Thameslink Railway and the West London Line network. He would welcome a provision in the legislation to enable a link in future.

The Chair thanked Mr Mulhearn, Ms Woodcock and the contributor from the floor for the useful discussion.

**10 Any other business**

There was no other business.

**11 Resolution to move into confidential session**

It was 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 a section of the meeting.

During the confidential session, members considered rail passenger compensation and reviewed the meeting.