

Transport for London

Minutes of the Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel

Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Palestra, 197 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NJ

10.00am, Tuesday 7 December 2021

Members

Dr Mee Ling Ng OBE	(Chair)
Bronwen Handyside	(via Teams)
Anne McMeel	(via Teams)
Dr Lynn Sloman MBE	

Board Members also in attendance

Marie Pye	(via Teams)
Peter Strachan	(via Teams)

Executive Committee

Howard Carter	General Counsel (via Teams)
Vernon Everitt	Managing Director Customers, Communication and Technology
Andy Lord	Managing Director, London Underground and TfL Engineering
Gareth Powell	Managing Director, Surface Transport

Other Staff

Siwan Hayward OBE	Director of Compliance, Policing, Operations and Security
James Mead	General Manager, On-Demand Transport (via Teams) (for Minute 44/12/21)
Shamus Kenny	Head of Secretariat
Jamie Mordue	Secretariat Officer (via Teams)

39/12/21 Apologies for Absence and Announcements

The flexibility of meetings regulations, which applied to TfL from August 2020 and enabled it to take decisions via videoconference, expired on 6 May 2021. Although all Panel Members were present the meeting was inquorate as Members participating by video conferencing facilities do not count towards quorum.

The meeting was being broadcast live on TfL's YouTube channel to ensure the public and press could observe the proceedings and decision-making.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and, on behalf of the Panel, welcomed Bronwen Handyside to her first Panel meeting since recovering from illness. The Chair welcomed the recently appointed Board Members Marie Pye and Peter Strachan to the meeting as observers and noted that subject to the decision of the Board on 8 December 2021, they would be Members of the Panel from January 2022.

The Chair reminded those present that safety was paramount at TfL and encouraged Members to raise any safety issues during discussions on a relevant item or with TfL staff after the meeting.

40/12/21 Declarations of Interest

All Members confirmed that their declarations of interests, as published on tfl.gov.uk, were up to date, including those for the two new Members, and there were no additional interests that related specifically to items on the agenda.

41/12/21 Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 7 October 2021

The Chair, following consultation with the Panel, approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021 as a correct record. The minutes would be provided to the Chair for signature at a future date.

42/12/21 Matters Arising and Actions List

Howard Carter introduced the item.

The Panel noted the Actions List.

43/12/21 Customer Services and Operational Performance Report – Quarter 2, 2021/22

Vernon Everitt introduced the paper, which provided the quarterly Customer Service and Operational Performance report for Quarter 2 2021/22.

TfL had operated a near full service. Overall ridership was around 70 per cent of pre-Coronavirus pandemic levels; ridership on the London Underground (LU) was 63 per cent and on the bus network 74 per cent. Travel for leisure had recovered stronger than travel for work.

Seventy-five per cent of Londoners had used public transport in the previous month and an average of three million Londoners travelled on the TfL network on weekdays. London TravelWatch reported that 90 per cent of people felt safe on trains and 80 per cent felt safe on the bus network. The reintroduction of legislation on mandatory face coverings had resulted in increased rates of compliance. TfL would continue to make the case to the Department for Transport for this to remain in force.

Andy Lord told the Panel that there had been a fatality at Farringdon station. A customer had hit the side of an oncoming train and fell back onto the platform. There was nothing to suggest that there were issues with station infrastructure or that more could have been done by station staff. The thoughts of the Panel and all TfL staff were with the friends and family.

There had been an incident at Tottenham Court Road station late on 3 December 2021. A woman had suffered a medical episode, prior to falling onto the tracks. The emergency services arrived within eight minutes and she was taken to hospital and

expected to make a full recovery. The station had been fully staffed with no overcrowding on the platform and no one else was involved. An investigation was underway and the outcome would be reported to the Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel.

LU continued to operate a strong service and had operated 89 per cent of its full service across a seven-day operating week. There were lower service levels at weekends, partly due to planned maintenance activities. The Waterloo & City line was operating fully on weekdays and the reintroduction of full services had been well received.

TfL was monitoring the impact of the Omicron variant of the Coronavirus in terms of absence levels, particularly as the rules on self-isolation for close contacts changed.

The Northern Line Extension continued to perform well and had stronger than expected passenger use. Snagging was being finalised and expected to be completed shortly.

Preparations were in place for the Bank station blockade from 15 January 2022, which would connect a new running tunnel and enable station works to provide new customer space and connections between the Northern line and the Central line and Dockland Light Railway (DLR). This was a key part of the Bank station capacity upgrade programme, which would increase capacity at the station by 40 per cent.

TfL Rail had performed strongly, particularly on the eastern branch, and Trial Operations on the Elizabeth line were progressing well.

Gareth Powell told the Panel that Surface Transport had performed well in the previous quarter. The demand on bus services continued to steadily increase and was at 75-77 per cent of pre-Coronavirus pandemic levels. Service levels were around 98 per cent.

Customer journey time continued to decrease, which was partly as a result of the efforts made by bus operators and in the control centre to improve traffic flow, through changes to signalling and traffic lights. Road traffic on the Transport for London Road Network was two to three per cent lower than the 2019 baseline, which also had a material impact on bus speeds. As customers returned to the bus service, TfL would work hard to keep improving customer journey time.

In Period 8 2021/22, the London Overground was the best performing rail service in the country, when measured by the number of trains that arrived at their destination within three minutes of their scheduled arrival time.

The DLR was consistently at or above 99 per cent for on time departures.

Congestion on the roads was not as high as expected. The fuel supply issue did not impact TfL services directly but queues had caused a delay for some bus services.

Vernon Everett told the Panel that the 'customer care' measure was an amalgamation of a number of facets of delivery, including: ease of travel and journey times for disabled Londoners, trust in TfL, reliability of service, communication, value for money, support when things go wrong, and helpful staff. During the period, 60 per cent agreed that 'TfL cared', which was the highest achieved for a long period of time. The number that disagreed that 'TfL cared' was also trending down.

Feedback from disabled Londoners showed that 56 per cent agreed that 'TfL cared'. This represented an increase from the previous periods and was thought to be as a result of the reintroduction of Turn Up and Go services. The lower than average feedback from disabled Londoners reinforced the need to provide step-free access, planning tools and staff training.

Since the emergence of the Omicron variant, there had been a plateau in the growth in ridership. TfL's forecast had shown that something was likely to happen over the winter period and a better understanding of how ridership had been impacted would be available in early 2022.

At TfL's general contact centre, there had been a 15 per cent abandonment rate in the period. A glitch in the 18+ student concessionary card system, caused by a security update, had meant cards were not sent as quickly as usual and more calls were received as a result. The issue was now resolved, all cards had been fulfilled and refunds for additional expenses had been issued.

The number of complaints per 100,000 passengers had fallen and the number of commendations for frontline staff had increase significantly. Staff were aware of the feedback they received through day to day communications and regular scorecard reviews.

TfL Go, which provided near real time crowding information at stations, had over 700,000 downloads and received ratings of 4.7 out of 5 on iOS devices and 4.3 out of 5 on Android devices. Work was ongoing to integrate other services into the app, subject to funding.

Members asked for a note to be provided on the reasons behind the increase in complaints relating to taxi and private hire vehicles. **[Action: Helen Chapman]**

There had been an infrastructure failure on the north side berth of the Woolwich Ferry, which was determined to be a design installation issue. TfL was working on a contingency plan while repairs were carried out. In addition to this, industrial action had taken place over the period. TfL was working with Unite and apologised for any inconvenience to customers.

Members asked if there was flexibility to move staff between contact centres to react to differing call volumes. It was noted that flexibility was conditioned by different contracts with different suppliers. As TfL continued to look for greater efficiencies, it would seek greater flexibility and resilience around contact centres.

The Panel asked about the industrial action relating to the Night Tube and the action taken to minimise disruption to customers. Andy Lord told the Panel that TfL had been in discussions with the ASLEF and RMT since February and an agreement had been reached with ASLEF in summer 2021. The RMT dispute was about grade consolidation, which would be voluntary, and nobody had lost or would lose their job. TfL had increased customer messaging to highlight possible disruption and advised customers to check their routes before using the network. TfL was looking at how it could improve service throughout periods of industrial action and to ensure there were enough buses or taxis and private hire vehicles.

Members asked what training LU staff received to maintain the safety of passengers who were under the influence of alcohol. Andy Lord told the Panel that LU station staff

were trained to look out for customers under the influence of alcohol. TfL did not have a policy of refusing travel for customers, particularly late at night, but in extreme cases staff may look to put customers in a taxi. TfL continued to look at what could be done to improve the safety of passengers and staff when dealing with people under the influence of alcohol.

The Panel noted the paper.

44/12/21 Assisted Transport Services Update

James Mead introduced the paper, which provided an update on the work carried out to progress the Assisted Transport Services (ATS) since February 2021.

James Mead thanked Joyce Mamode for her work at TfL, in particular in her role as Head of Assisted Transport; she had recently left her role at TfL upon completion of her PhD and was pursuing a career in academia. The Panel echoed the thanks, wished her well for her future endeavours and stated that she would be as much of an asset to academia as she was to TfL.

Levels of Dial-a-Ride services were steadily increasing and were now at nearly 50 per cent of pre-Coronavirus pandemic volumes, compared to 15 per cent in February 2021. The number of journey requests had plateaued, primarily due to concerns about rising numbers of coronavirus cases amongst passengers and delays in reopening of social clubs. TfL tried to minimise the number of passengers on a bus at any one time but could take up to six passengers, particularly when picking up or dropping off from a single location. All passengers are required to wear face masks, unless they have an exemption, and changes in messaging from central government was welcomed.

There had been considerable growth in usage of Taxicard and it had reached 90 per cent of the pre-Coronavirus pandemic levels in the summer and autumn. This had since reduced to 70 per cent and it was thought there was initially an amount of pent up demand as restrictions began to ease. Performance remained high and 95 per cent of passengers had been picked up within the allotted time.

It was noted that, while TfL provided the funding for Taxicard, it was operated and managed by London Councils, which was responsible for most of the active promotion. TfL promoted Taxicard through its customer facing publications, such as in the Accessible Transport in London brochure. TfL was working with London Councils to see how requirements and benefits of Taxicard could be harmonised across London.

TfL monitored the availability of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers, which was at a good level but lower than in previous years. It was noted that ComCab had joined ventures with Addison Lee and was recruiting drivers.

Face to face services for the travel mentoring service and 'Bus Days', where travel mentors would show up to 30 people how to use the network independently at a local garage, had both restarted. Digital sessions also took place and TfL was led by customers.

Demand responsive bus (DRB) trials in Ealing and Sutton had ended earlier than planned, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The trials found that Londoners who had a Freedom Pass were happy to use DRB services and represented 50 per cent of

users. The services were accessible to most types of wheelchairs, users of which represented 13 per cent of DRB users. Booking through the app was the most popular method of booking; 83 per cent of customers in Ealing and 93 per cent of Freedom Pass customers used the app. A telephone line would always be available but the data showed that people were happy, or preferred, to use an app.

Feedback had highlighted that one concern was that the pickup or drop off point might change for the same journey on different days. However, overall feedback was positive and customer satisfaction was over 9.6 out of 10. Twenty-three out of 39 Dial-a-Ride customers who used DRB services would use it again. In future, it was possible that DRB service providers would be brought into the mix of ATS that TfL provided.

For the ATS one-stop shop booking and scheduling platform, there were three preferred bidders and TfL was undertaking a negotiation phase with the finalists to ensure best value for money was achieved.

Members asked what protections were in place for services, should government funding not be sufficient. James Mead told the Panel that, as things stood, TfL was committed to maintaining current funding for Taxicard and the Budget allowed for a full service of Dial-a-Ride. Proactive steps had been taken to reduce costs. Gareth Powell noted that under a scenario where TfL did not receive adequate funding, all services that TfL provided would need to be reviewed.

Discussions with the health sector and the NHS on ATS remained paused. Through ATS, TfL did provide transport to places other than hospitals, such as GPs or physios, but could not provide transport to hospitals; the NHS was specifically funded to provide that service. It was possible that a future booking and scheduling system could be used to book services to hospitals, through the third parties contracted by the NHS to deliver journeys, but this would require further funding.

The Panel noted the paper.

45/12/21 Customer Safety and Security Update

Siwan Hayward introduced the report, which provided an overview of the key elements of TfL's work to improve the safety of women and girls while travelling in London and set out the pattern and trends in customers' personal safety and security.

There had been a significant shift in public expectations around the prioritisation of the safety of women and girls. TfL had reflected on what it was currently doing, such as Project Guardian, and what more it could do for customers, for colleagues and to the culture of the organisation. TfL had a role in creating the type of place that people want to live in and to utilise its position with stakeholders. The action plan on TfL's work on women and girls' safety had been reviewed and revised. It was now a live document that was constantly updated and challenged.

A pan-TfL working group had been established and one of its first objectives was to determine how TfL could better understand what was happening to women and girls on the network. It was known that sexual offences were under reported and under recorded, or a public order offence might not set out that there was a sexual element to the offence. To fully understand the situation, policing partners had been asked to

check the previous six months of public order offences to determine whether any should be also classified as sexual harassment.

Members noted that the number of reports increasing would not necessarily be a bad thing, given the current underreporting. It was recognised that many victims did not want to go through the criminal justice system, but the reporting of unwanted behaviours was valuable to inform TfL activity. To this end, TfL was working with policing partners on third party reporting and was rolling out refresher training on sexual harassment to all front-line colleagues, to help them understand what was or was not acceptable, to show empathy and to provide a means of reporting. TfL was looking to see how best to deliver this to taxi and private hire vehicle drivers.

TfL had launched a campaign against sexual harassment on the network, which would be 'always on' and designed to be bold and challenging. It spoke directly to offenders about their behaviour, set the expected standards of behaviour on the network and identified what behaviours constituted sexual harassment. In addition to poster campaigns, TfL used blogs and social media to reach a wider audience. The campaign reinforced that TfL was a public institution that challenged behaviour and believed that sexual harassment was unacceptable.

Members of the public were called upon to challenge behaviour and asked to consider being upstanding rather than standing by. A guide had been published on the TfL website on how others could neutralise an offender and provide direct support to a victim. TfL had also increased work in schools through delivery of lessons to pupils in years 8 and 9, though the London Transport Museum, to help them understand what constitutes sexual harassment and how to challenge behaviour.

As an organisation, TfL looked at how domestic violence impacted staff and customers. An explicit domestic violence policy would be established, which recognised that domestic violence had an impact on the workplace environment and that TfL had a responsibility to keep colleagues safe at work. In the new year a widget would be published on the TfL website to allow users to access direct support without any trace appearing in the browsing history. Over the longer term, work would look at how TfL stations and the network in general could be further recognised as a safe space.

TfL sought to be a White Ribbon accredited organisation. This called on men to take a stance against harassment or unwanted sexual behaviours towards women and girls and to actively challenge when it was seen; evidence had shown that the culture of an organisation was fundamental to the quality of services provided to customers.

The Panel thanked the team for their work in this area and stated that TfL should be proud that it was playing a role in helping to tackle harassment, unwanted sexual behaviours and violence against women and girls.

Members welcomed the fact that the sexual harassment campaign would be 'always on' and asked that thought be given to how it could be kept active and refreshed, given that TfL did not always have digital screens in Tube carriages. Marketing colleagues were conscious that the campaign did not become wallpaper and that the messaging be given prominence. Digital sites allowed for easier rotation and updates and TfL would use social media and third parties to disseminate the messages.

The 27 allegations of stranger rapes against private hire vehicle drivers represented around four per cent of all stranger rapes in London in 2019. Most of these cases were

instances where there had not been a legitimate booking and passengers were picked up on the street. It was very rare to have allegations of rape on the bus or Underground network. TfL and its policing partners ran the Safe Travel at Night campaign to remind people to only get into their booked vehicle and to explore what more could be done to improve safety. Compliance officers were deployed to taxi ranks outside those stations outside London to check that drivers in the ranks were legitimate. TfL had regular contact and shared information with licensing authorities outside of London.

There was an understanding of the profile of the most predatory offenders on the network, who often targeted people on the network because they had some level of anonymity. Plain clothed teams were deployed to target those who displayed behaviours associated with offenders. There was a broader range of behaviours in offenders that committed other acts of harassment, such as leering or upskirting. Future reports would contain further detail on what TfL and policing partners were doing in campaigns to target different types of offenders.

On crime and anti-social behaviour, there had been a slight increase in the rate of crime against passengers. For every one million journeys made on the network there were 11 crimes reported, which was an increase from eight per million from before the Coronavirus pandemic. This was still a low level of crime and the network was safe and secure; some increases in reporting were in areas that TfL had worked to improve reporting of, such as sexual offences and hate crime.

Reports of robbery committed by younger people against younger people had increased on the network and followed trends seen more widely across London. The British Transport Police had taken steps to proactively target hotspots, immediately circulated CCTV stills and typically arrested suspects within 24 hours.

From a customer perspective, as more customers returned to the network, there was a corresponding increase in concerns. Uniformed staff and policing partners played an important role in promoting a safe environment; from September 2021, uniformed revenue checkers returned and Police Community Support Officers had returned to the Tube and bus networks. TfL was working with policing partners to ensure the right balance was struck and it was noted that encouraging higher rates of reporting meant a higher workload for policing partners.

The Panel thanked Siwan Hayward and her team for their work and energy in pushing forward the work on offences against women and girls and ensuring that it became engrained in the culture of TfL.

The Panel noted the paper.

46/12/21 Members' Suggestions for Future Discussion Items

Howard Carter introduced the Forward Plan.

The Panel noted the paper.

47/12/21 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

There was no other urgent business.

48/12/21 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting was due to be held on Thursday 17 March 2022 at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Chair: _____

Date: _____