

Public Transport Liaison Panel

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 29 September 2020 at 10.00 am
Held remotely via MS Teams

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Muhammad Ali (Chair)
Councillor Nina Degrad (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ben-Hassel

Ian Plowright (Head of Transport, LB Croydon)
John Osborne (Access Officer, Strategic Transport Team, LB Croydon)

Go Ahead Buses

Angeline Verillo

Arriva London

Richard Simmonds (Service Delivery Manager)

Transport for London (TfL)

Michelle Wildish (Engagement Officer)

London Trams (TfL)

Mark Davis (General Manager)

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)

Yvonne Leslie (Senior Stakeholder Manager)

East Surrey Transport Committee (ESTC)

Mobility Forum (MF)

Charles King (Chair of ESTC and MF)

London TravelWatch (LTW)

Tim Bellenger (Director of Policy and Investigation)

Apologies:

Councillor Michael Neal

PART A

12/20

Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Councillor Degrad nominated and Charles King (ESTC) seconded the motion to appoint Councillor Muhammad Ali as Chair for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

Councillor Muhammad Ali nominated and Charles King (ESTC) seconded the motion to appoint Councillor Nina Degrad as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

13/20 **Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all those present to introduce themselves.

The Chair invited everyone to participate in a one-minute silence in honour of Sergeant Matt Retana who lost his life in Croydon Custody Centre last week.

14/20 **Disclosures of interests**

There were none.

15/20 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The ESTC representative noted that there were some errors recording the street names and bus numbers, however the subject matter did capture the sentiment of what was said.

In response to the ESTC representative asking for an update on the bus route to Kenley, the Chair stated that this would be addressed on agenda Item 5.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

16/20 **Buses**

a) TfL response to Covid (TfL – Michelle Wildish)

The TfL representative presented slides on the TfL response to Covid, which were shared with the Panel after the meeting.

This presentation outlined the severity of the impacts, including loss of life of colleagues, and how service delivery would be effected going forward, particularly from a financial position due to the loss of income. The presentation covered the challenges of the huge drop in passenger numbers, the next steps to encourage people to return to public transport and TfL's work to banner consistent, up to date and clear safety messaging.

The TfL representative told the Panel that for any further information on these subjects they should visit their website.

School Services

The TfL representative said they were working with schools and the DfE to help match capacity and demand and were working hard to ensure children were getting to school on time. There were designated non-schools services for adults who were unable to retime their journeys, which supported social distancing and safeguarding measures. There were also other initiatives to promote other modes of travel for students to take to school. The feedback had been positive and there was constant monitoring of how the network was operating to try and to move capacity to high demand areas.

11-15 and 16+ Zip Oyster travel

The TfL representative stated that under 18 free travel remained valid for all school children, but the government has asked TfL to temporarily suspend free travel for 11-17 year olds as part of our funding agreement with them. TfL were discussing the implementation of this with the Government and other boroughs. This change would bring a large administrative task for TfL and the local authority.

The London Travel Watch (LTW) representative stated that London Councils had concerns about withdrawing the concessions and were working on counter action against the withdrawal; he asked whether Croydon Council could follow a similar resolution to other London boroughs, like Lambeth, by supporting child poverty action campaigns to stop the move and help low-income family children. The withdrawal would particularly effect Croydon's demographic.

The Chair stated that there would be a significant number of children in the borough effected by the decision to withdraw, at approx. 90,000 passes. Withdrawing the Zipcard would make life hard for many families, particularly in the midst of Covid financial pressures, whilst trying to encourage people to use public transport.

The TfL representative stated that they could recommend and provide a contact for anyone who wanted to write a letter to the government to support retaining the current zip card arrangements, adding that the decision was ultimately theirs.

The ESTC representative stated that the system needed to be further checked because if withdrawn, the cost of a pupil travelling to school over 3 miles transfers to that borough. The TfL representative stated that free journeys to school or college were over 2 miles for those aged between 10-17 years. This was less distance if the young person had a social worker, held an EHCP, attended a PRU or a free school and did not have a safe walking route to school and were not mobile enough to walk.

The Head of Transport responded that local authorities have a duty to cover young people's transport if their journey was more than three miles, or if they

have special educational needs, a disability or limited mobility. The administrative burden of withdrawing Zipcards would fall on local authorities and TfL.

Councillor Degrad asked who would be eligible for the under 18 free travel card in the proposals and it considered low-income families. The TfL representative responded that she did not know the detail of this, but the DfT would be conducting a public EIA in due course.

London Streetspace and the Walking and cycling response

The TfL representative stated that there was a £30m government funding for local authorities to introduce schemes to change how people travelled around the city. The scheme as a whole was to introduce Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), temporary strategic cycle lanes/routes and space for social distancing, including school streets. The Streetspace Plan aimed to ensure streets could cope with increased demand for walking and cycling and to avoid a damaging car-led recovery from coronavirus. Following surveys, 51% agreed with the implementation of LTNs and of them being implemented longer term subject to consultation and 81% of people agreed that walking and cycling were good for London.

LTW compiled a 'Have your say' guide to provide residents and users with a step-by-step guide on how to evaluate LTN schemes without bias. This guide should be promoted to ensure residents were informed on the process. LTW would be engaging with London boroughs to analyse the impact schemes would have on disabled people and how their needs could be accommodated, further stating an EIA should be completed.

The LTW webpage regarding London Streetspace could be found on the following link: <https://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/activetravel/>

The ESTC representative stated that they were not opposed to reducing traffic, however the lack of consultation was a cause for concern. There needed to be more consideration for equalities, as there were examples in London where taxis were not allowed to use roads in the schemes, for example areas in Lambeth, which meant reduced mobility for some users and additional taxi fares to circumvent those routes. The TfL representative replied that she would feedback those comments to her Lambeth counterpart.

The Head of Transport stated that the strategy strove to encourage people who were underrepresented amongst cyclists, such as members BAME groups, children, older people, and women. Fear of road danger was the main reason given for people not cycling and the Streetspace schemes sought to make safer quieter space for cycling and walking.

The following was discussed of the TfL response to Covid:

The LTW representative stated they supported TfL's introduction of more 24/7 bus lanes and suggested that Croydon should follow suit to implement those on more borough roads. The Head of Transport responded that they were

looking to make bus lanes 24/7 on a key route in Croydon and were currently working on designs.

The ESTC representative told the Panel that since meeting with the Programme Manager from Planning and Strategic Transport there had been some positive changes to bus routes, including Routes 12, 405 and 412 which used Park Street as a temporary stop. There was also not a temporary stop on the high street, which would benefit from turning into a permanent stop in future. Route 433 was supposed to observe the Park Lane stop however often missed the stop; therefore bus flags should be introduced.

The ESTC representative raised concern over older students failing to wear face coverings when leaving schools and using bus stops. He said that he saw this issue around tram stops, particularly on Church Street, and he had been contacted by a residents association about similar issues. He asked if there could be any checks made by TfL to address this. The London Trams representative replied that they were checking trams, particularly in the East Croydon area but they would follow up with additional attention to Church Street. He added that it must be remembered by all that there were residents who were exempt from wearing a mask.

Councillor Degrad's asked if young people were liable to fines, and if so, would their guardian be responsible for this, adding that monitoring should be held with discretion and only hold accountable genuine cases of noncompliance. The TfL representative responded the aim was to penalise people wilfully not following the rules. TfL had written to all schools to ask students to wear masks on public transport. The TfL representative stated that they would find out if parents or guardians were liable for fixed penalty notices to young people in the event of not wearing masks.

In response to the Chair stating that the situation was a moving picture and TfL should be mindful of increasing cases alongside their drive to increase ridership. The London Trams representative responded that TfL's plans did have provision for a second wave and all modes of transport were preparing for different types of lockdown. TfL would be prepared to respond from lessons learnt in the spring.

b) X26 Bus to serve Waddon (TfL – Michelle Wildish)

The TfL representative told the Panel that the Leader of the Council and TfL's Director of Public Transport Planning met Cllr King the Cabinet Member for Transport to discuss a planned consultation on bus route changes and the prospect of Route X26 making a stop at Waddon, given that 9000 houses would be built on Purley Way was raised. The case was still to be discussed and TfL would pick this up with the Head of Transport outside of the Panel.

c) The replacement of Selsdon Road Rail Bridge and the effect on bus services 403 and 412 (TfL – Michelle Wildish)

The ESTC representative stated that a shuttle bus needed to be planned to be provided to the area whilst the works were being planned. The TfL representative replied that they had contacted Network Rail asking them to update TfL on their plans over the winter period so they were able to plan for alternative bus provisions for transport users, which they would communicate to residents as early as possible.

The ESTC representative asked if there was a prospective date for the additional buses on Route 405. The Arriva London representative stated these would be on the road in approximately one week and they were also introducing new buses onto Route 202.

17/20 **Trains**

a) Report on the GTR Passenger Benefit proposals for Croydon Stations (GTR – Yvonne Leslie)

The GTR representative presented slides on the Passenger Benefit Fund (PBF), which were shared with the Panel after the meeting. This presentation outlined the programme and how it was developed through resident feedback and suggestions. There was a fund allocation per station and it had been broadly decided what was planned at most of those sites. Projects were underway pre-Covid, however they had to stop for much of the summer but now had resumed.

The lists of planned work could be found on the following link:

www.southernrailway.com/about-us/our-commitments/improving-your-stations

The following was discussed:

In response to the Chair asking if West Croydon Station would see any improvements from this scheme, The GTR representative stated that West Croydon Station was not included in the programme. The Fund was for GTR managed stations or stations with Thameslink services. The other operator stations had a longer approval rating process.

Councillor Ben-Hassel stated that it was agreed in Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee that there would be a discussion between GTR and the council for ideas on pooling funding to insure benefits were driven towards outcomes with impact, opposed to smaller changes which did not improve the lives of passengers. She raised that the Transport department had difficulty contacting GTR and now the decisions had already been made and an opportunity was missed, where council and ward councillor knowledge of the users and areas could have been utilised. A mosaic would be a nice addition to a station, however things could have been identified with more impact, such as a second entrance at Norbury onto

London Road. In response to the GTR representative stating that she would check with the project manager but a second entrance was not feasible in all areas, Councillor Ben-Hassel said that some of these ideas would have been feasible had the funds been pooled. The Chair stated that the PBF could have been spread to be spent on more substantive changes on a number of sites, particularly to improvements to mobility infrastructure, which would make a huge difference to people's lives.

The ESTC representative stated the DfT refused to introduce the Oyster service at Reigate, which would have benefitted far more people than some of the planned improvements listed in the presentation.

The Head of Transport expressed frustration over the missed opportunity of some improvements, specifically the Norbury second entrance. The GTR representative explained that the PBF had been directed at projects which did not require any ongoing funding. The Planning and Strategic Transport Officer spent years trying to give GTR capital funding to open the entrance onto London Road, but the push back was the revenue cost associated, but that cost would shrink as they moved closer towards the end of the franchise period. The council later reiterated the request to pool money where they thought GTR were able to and make a noticeable difference to passenger experience, which was what the PBF original aim was and felt like a missed opportunity after years of trying to introduce the entrance.

For East Croydon Station improvement, there was not much engagement but there was a discussion and the council had a list of improvements. For larger stations, there needed targeted improvements to make a difference, not necessarily physical ones. One suggestion was a deep clean of the station and Thornton Heath Station. Some PBF improvements were not strategic, such as murals because the council provided its own programme to deliver murals in the town centre and often would not have a lasting effect.

b) GTR plans for encouraging people back to Rail (GTR – Yvonne Leslie)

The GTR representative presented a slide on encouraging people back to rail, which was shared with the Panel after the meeting. This outlined the extra support GTR provided during this time including an enhanced cleaning regime, clear information to passengers in advance of travelling and staff at hand to help provide clear key messaging at stations to wear masks and wash hands. The train service provisions were devised progressively depending on demand, feedback from stakeholders and operational feasibility which was linked to staff shielding/isolating or delayed training. To track demand since the start of the pandemic, GTR were looking at data sets using infrared and weighted measures at ticketing entrances and on trains which gave real time views on trends which they could feedback to passengers. GTR were continuing to align with government advice. There was regional variants and GTR promoted the safe travel pledge in line with other operators.

18/20 **Trams**

a) Update from London Trams on proposed improvements to the trams to increase capacity including extra platform at Elmers End (TfL – Michelle Wildish)

The London Trams representative stated that many projects were on hold during this time across TfL because of the financial situation, and paused until there was an outcome settlement from the DfT. For Elmers End, there had been no progress with the project since the last meeting but the scheme was still live in case funds became available to proceed.

The London Trams representative informed the Panel about an incident of young people vandalising the tramline by laying concrete on the track. The perpetrators had been identified as students not from an LBC school. London Trams were in discussion with the BTP and wanted action taken against them, and as a minimum London Trams hoped they could pick up this incident with the school. This incident occurred close to the Phipps Bridge area, where a similar circumstances caused a tram derailment in 2019. This sort of vandalism activity was difficult to tackle.

19/20 **Any other business**

There was none.

20/20 **Items for next meeting**

The Chair asked the Panel to inform the Clerk of any topics they would like to be discussed at the next meeting before 19 January 2021.

21/20 **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting of the Panel was scheduled for Tuesday 9 February 2021.

The meeting ended at 11.45 am

Signed:

Date: