

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, Thursday 17 March 2022

Members

Dr Mee Ling Ng OBE	(Chair)
Marie Pye	(Vice-Chair, via Teams)
Anne McMeel	
Dr Lynn Sloman MBE	(via Teams)
Peter Strachan	

Executive Committee

Howard Carter	General Counsel (via Teams)
Andy Lord	Chief Operating Officer
Gareth Powell	Chief Customer and Strategy Officer

Other Staff

Mark Evers	Chief Customer Officer
Shamus Kenny	Head of Secretariat
Jamie Mordue	Secretariat Officer

01/03/22 Apologies for Absence and Announcements

The Chair welcomed attendees, including Marie Pye and Peter Strachan who were attending their first meeting as Members of the Panel. 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 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.

An apology for absence was received from Bronwen Handyside.

02/03/22 Declarations of Interest

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

03/03/22 Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 7 December 2021

The Panel approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 as a correct record and authorised the Chair to sign them.

04/03/22 Matters Arising and Actions List

Howard Carter introduced the item.

The Panel noted the Actions List.

05/03/22 Customer Services and Operational Performance Report – Quarter 3, 2021/22

Gareth Powell introduced the paper, which provided the quarterly Customer Service and Operational Performance report for Quarter 3, 2021/22 (19 September to 11 December 2021). There were good levels of operational performance and customer service during the quarter, in which there were varying levels of government restrictions.

Ridership increased over the quarter and, since the removal of restrictions, there had been a steady and strong recovery in ridership.

Bus ridership was 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels under Plan B restrictions in the quarter. Bus ridership was at between 75-80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels; some bus routes were now near 100 per cent of ridership levels. Tube ridership was currently at 65 per cent of pre-pandemic ridership; weekend ridership was stronger than weekday. The Night Tube and Night Overground were at 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Members welcomed the steady increase in ridership.

The expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone was launched during the quarter. The customer service launch went to plan and it was having a strong impact on air quality.

Andy Lord told the Panel that, tragically, there had been two fatalities involving buses and pedestrians. Both incidents were under investigation. On 25 January 2022 a bus carrying school children had crashed in Highams Park, resulting in 20 injuries to the passengers and to the driver. The cause of the crash was still under investigation. On 1 February 2022 there was a fire on a bus, which had to be evacuated. One passenger was asleep but was rescued by the London Ambulance Service (LAS); TfL had written to commend the LAS officers.

On the Tube there had been a fatality at Euston on 9 March 2022, when a passenger accidentally fell onto the track.

There had been a collision between a tram and a car on 30 January 2022, as the car driver had stopped across the tramway without sufficient clearance.

The thoughts of all at TfL were with those affected by these incidents.

Service levels were impacted by staff absences in the quarter, particularly on the Tube, which operated at 90 per cent against schedule. Bus services operated at over 97 per cent, Docklands Light Railway (DLR) operated at just below 99 per cent, trams operated at 98 per cent and Dial-a-Ride operated above target. The Overground and TfL Rail operated at 94 and 93 per cent respectively and both continued to be in the top rail providers in the country. The Woolwich Ferry operated below target at 72 per cent against schedule, because of continued industrial action.

The leaf fall timetable was implemented from October to December 2021. Some disruption was seen on the Piccadilly line, but it was managed well with fewer train cancellations than in previous years. TfL was monitoring the investigation from the Salisbury incident to determine if any learnings could be taken.

The RMT union had issued industrial action dates until the end of June 2022, in relation to the Night Tube. A full service was in operation on the Victoria line and a regular service was in operation on the Central line. More clarity would be provided on the wider Night Tube services in the coming weeks.

Talks between TfL and the RMT union continued; TfL was notified of two dates for industrial action on 1 and 3 March 2022 on the full Tube network. The action was disruptive but there were no significant safety issues. Andy Lord thanked TfL colleague for taking up ambassadorial roles.

Gareth Powell told the Panel that the 'TfL cares about its customers' metric was above target at 57 per cent for the year to date. TfL would focus on the areas underpinning that score, such as providing support when things went wrong, building trust and making sure there was good communication. The metric score was lower, however, for disabled customers who were disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic measures. TfL was conducting a deep dive on accessibility on the transport network, which would be shared with the Panel once completed. An update on the disaggregation of different demographics within the metric would also be shared at a future meeting of the Panel.

[Action: Mark Evers]

Contact centre performance had been impacted by a significant increase in demand, driven by the annual processing of ticketing concessions, and compounded by Covid-19 related staffing issues. Performance was now in a stable position and TfL apologised for disruption. The provider had since taken steps to resolve system issues and staffing. Members would be provided with a note on the main staffing issues, what improvements had been implemented, what leverage TfL had in the contract with the call centre provider and the latest figures for Quarter 4 (12 December 2021 to 31 March 2022).

[Action: Shashi Verma]

There had been a decrease in complaints on some modes, such as the Tube, buses, DLR and Overground. Commendations for staff had increased by one per cent since the previous quarter, but by 48 per cent from the same quarter in the previous year. Commendations for colleagues on buses had increased by 10 per cent.

The TfLGo app had additional customisation features, such as preferred travel modes. The app had over one million downloads, up from 550,000 since the launch of the app; there was high demand during recent industrial action.

It was too early to tell whether increases in petrol prices had reduced private vehicle use or increased public transport use, although it did present an opportunity for

Londoners to reconsider the value for money that travelling on the TfL network provided.

There were no safety issues arising from the action taken in the quarter to reduce the number of taxi and private hire vehicles needing inspection, and to bring forecasted demand on the contact centre within capacity levels.

Earlier in the week of the meeting, there had been a report of smoke from a point near Canary Wharf station on the Jubilee line, however, this was inspected with specialist equipment and no heat was found. The Central line had been suspended on the morning of the meeting due to a track fire outside Holborn station.

The Bus Action Plan had been published, which set out what packages of measures were required and what changes customers expected to see in their bus journey experience, to boost ridership and meet net zero carbon targets by 2030. There was a showcase route which had different seating formations and other features. Feedback from customers would inform future vehicle specification. A paper on the Bus Action Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel. **[Action: Gareth Powell]**

Members asked what the current trend in ridership meant in terms of recovery planning. Gareth Powell told the Panel that the current ridership was at the lower end of the previous Budget calculations as recovery had been impacted by the implementation of the Government's Plan B in England.

The Panel asked how TfL might operate cycle lanes more flexibly, particularly at night when there were fewer cyclists on the road. Gareth Powell told the Panel that it was a challenge to provide the right level of safe segregated cycleway in a safe and flexible way. TfL was looking at how buses and cyclists could share the road safely, to ensure that cyclist had plenty of space, and to use technology enhancements on buses. TfL was open to using any technology that allowed cycle lanes to operate flexibly to reflect the circumstances at specific times of day, but it was not thought to exist currently.

Members noted that there had been a long-term decline in the demand for Dial-a-Ride services, which were currently at just under 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. TfL was looking into the cause of this, but it was thought to be a combination of closure of typical destinations and an accelerated move to online activities. The paper relating to Assisted Transport Services at the next meeting of the Panel would include a deep dive on Dial-a-Ride and include information on the call wait time and complaints for the contact centre. **[Action: James Mead]**

Members requested a paper at a future meeting on TfL's strategy on electrified travel, such as e-scooters. It was noted that use of privately-owned e-scooters or other powered transporters was not permitted on public roads. Trials that were organised by TfL and London Councils had been permitted under regulations from the Department for Transport and proved to have a good safety record and were geo-fenced to specific locations. It was often the case that privately owned vehicles were below the safety standards for those being operated in the trial and were not permitted to be used or carried on public transport, owing to the fire risk they posed. **[Action: Gareth Powell]**

On the Elizabeth line, five major trial exercises had been completed. Over 1,800 people took part in the simulation of 24 trains per hour services between Paddington and Woolwich. Several scenarios and customer behaviour events were tested, which were all dealt with by stations teams. Feedback was positive and there was a good level of

preparedness. The line was expected to operate as a revenue service before the end of the first half of the year.

The Panel noted the paper.

06/03/22 Enterprise Risk Update – Major Service Disruption (ER3)

Andy Lord introduced the paper, which provided an update on Enterprise Risk 3 – Major Service Disruption (ER3).

Significant elements of ER3 had been realised as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. In the previous two years, TfL had enacted its crisis management processes, which formed part of the controls of this risk. The annual review of ER3 was undertaken through the lens of TfL's response to the pandemic and the effectiveness of its mitigation actions.

To ensure that the lessons learned in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic were being embedded within TfL, a briefing would be provided on the lessons learned and the good practice developed. **[Action: Andy Lord]**

The Panel noted the paper.

07/03/22 Members' Suggestions for Future Discussion Items

Howard Carter introduced the Forward Plan.

Members asked that plans for visits that had been paused owing to the coronavirus pandemic be restarted.

Following the reorganisation of TfL's Executive team, suggestions on future agenda items were welcomed from Gareth Powell and Andy Lord once areas of accountability were finalised.

The Panel noted the paper.

08/03/22 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

Andy Lord told the Panel that step-free access was completed at Harrow-on-the-Hill station in the previous week, which was the most complex implementation of step-free access delivered on the network. There was no further dedicated TfL funding for step-free access programmes, until there was confirmation of longer-term funding.

The blockade on the Northern line at Bank station was making good progress and on track for mid-May 2022 completion. There was little negative feedback from customers, largely due to the travel demand work done prior to the blockade.

There was no other urgent business.

09/03/22 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting was due to be held on Wednesday 13 July 2022 at 10.00am.

10/03/22 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair, following consultation with the Panel, agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), when it considered the exempt information in relation to the item on: Enterprise Risk Update – Major Service Disruption (ER3).

The meeting closed at 11.45am.

Chair: 

Date: 15/07/22