

Transport for London

Minutes of the Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel

Teams Virtual Meeting

10:30am, Wednesday 4 October 2023

Members

Dr Mee Ling Ng OBE (Chair)
Marie Pye (Vice-Chair)
Anne McMeel
Dr Lynn Sloman MBE
Peter Strachan (up to Minute 32/10/23 (part))

Executive Committee

Glynn Barton	Interim Chief Operating Officer
Alex Williams	Chief Customer and Strategy Officer

Other staff

Joel Adams	Lead Sponsor, Investment Delivery Planning, London Underground and the Elizabeth line
Helen Chapman	Director of Licensing and Regulation
Mark Evers	Chief Customer Officer
Shamus Kenny	Head of Secretariat
Zoe Manzoor	Senior Committee Officer
David Rowe	Director of Investment Delivery Planning
Emma Strain	Customer Director
Howard Smith	Director of the Elizabeth line

Also in attendance

Sophie Bancroft	Operations Director, Network Rail
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28/10/23 Apologies for Absence and Chair's Announcements

Apologies for absence had been received from Bronwen Handyside and Councillor Kieron Williams. Peter Strachan had advised that he would need to leave early due to the impact of the industrial action on the railways on his attendance at other meetings. As the meeting was online due to industrial action, it was not quorate. The only item for approval was the Minutes from the previous meeting.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was being broadcast live on TfL's YouTube channel, to ensure the public and press could observe the proceedings.

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.

29/10/23 Declarations of Interest

Members confirmed that their declarations of interests, as published on tfl.gov.uk, were up to date.

There were no interests declared that related specifically to items on the agenda.

30/10/23 Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 12 July 2023

The Panel confirmed that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 12 July 2023 were a correct record and the Chair exercised Chair's Action to approve them. The minutes would be provided to the Chair for signature at a future date.

31/10/23 Matters Arising and Actions List

Shamus Kenny introduced the paper, which set out progress against actions agreed at previous meetings of the Panel.

In relation to Action 20/07/23 (1) Customer Safety and Security Update, the Panel would be provided with further information on crime statistics per transport mode and would consider a deep-dive on this matter. **[Action: Siwan Hayward]**

Members noted a correction to the status update for Action 18/07/23 TfL Go Update: Accessible Transport Services, which should have referred to highlighting taxi ranks at key interchanges.

The Panel noted the actions list.

32/10/23 Customer Service and Operational Performance Report - Quarter 1, 2023/24

Alex Williams, Glynn Barton and Emma Strain introduced the paper, which provided an update on TfL's customer service and operational performance for Quarter 1 of 2023/24 (1 April to 24 June 2023).

Alex Williams highlighted the change in format of the report, to reflect the 2023/24 TfL Scorecard and the new metric on customer journey times.

Ridership levels across TfL's services had continued to steadily increase since the coronavirus pandemic, with growth targets exceeded. In addition to running public information campaigns, Members suggested that TfL should place greater emphasis on campaigns aimed at attracting ridership back, including work to reach out to disabled customers, particularly in outer London. An informal briefing would be arranged for the Panel. **[Action: Alex Williams]**

Members thanked officers for the good progress being made to deliver the new Superloop bus service network, which was being delivered at pace with the aim of completing the proposed network by spring 2024. Details of the ridership data for the Superloop would be included in future reports.

The Panel discussed the trends in bus journeys and bus journey time savings, which were significantly worse than target. There had also been a rise in bus complaints, and it was discussed whether further work should be carried out to explore the reasons behind these trends. TfL was undertaking steps to improve performance, including

implementing its Bus Action Plan, and was working to give increased priority to buses, but meeting the targets was proving challenging. TfL also worked closely with London boroughs on planned road works, to minimise delays. A paper on bus ridership as well as the lessons learnt from the successful implementation of the Superloop and how this could be more widely applied would be prepared and submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

[Action: Alex Williams]

Reassurances were sought regarding the recruitment of female drivers and, generally, on progress with initiatives to ensure that the transport network was as accessible as possible to all groups. It was confirmed that TfL was working to attract more women into the industry through a range of initiatives, such as the Women in the Bus and Coach Industry initiative, and the provision of welfare facilities.

The Panel noted that hires of Santander Cycles were below target. It was confirmed that, at a future meeting, the Panel would receive an update on the future of e-bikes contracting as set out in the forward plan, which would cover the issue of docked and dockless cycle hire.

TfL had put in place measures to improve the availability of the Woolwich Ferry, including measures to recruit additional qualified staff. The shortages were mainly due to resourcing issues. An informal briefing would be arranged and the Panel would be offered a site visit.

[Action: Glynn Barton]

The cover paper for future reports would provide a brief update on any substantive issues between the end of the quarter that was the subject of the report and the publication of the paper for the meeting, to ensure that the Panel received up to date information.

[Action: Alex Williams]

The Panel sought reassurance that TfL was doing its upmost to address the issue of fraudulent Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) scam websites. This was a criminal activity and TfL was working closely with the police on this matter. TfL would be publishing a report on the operation of the ULEZ covering compliance, and this would be sent to all Board Members.

The Panel noted the paper.

33/10/23 Deep-Dive on TfL's "Care Score"

Mark Evers and Emma Strain presented the paper, which provided the latest insight into care trends.

For the past 11 years, TfL had monitored the proportion of Londoners that believe 'TfL cares about its customers' (often referred to as the care score). TfL continued to work hard to study the evidence base, and had successfully increased the score. The overall care score remained consistent. However, significant disparities in the care score persisted for different customer groups, often due to customer perceptions. The most notable difference was between the experiences of male and female customers, with the scores being lower among females. There were also differences in perceptions, particularly between disabled Londoners who used TfL services, which had significantly higher care scores than those that did not.

The care scores between inner and outer London residents were very similar, as were the scores between ethnic groups. TfL carried out benchmarking and would also be

benchmarking performance against other sectors and transport providers, to gain valuable information to help with meeting the target for TfL care scores.

The Panel noted the need to improve the accessibility of the network for females and disabled customers, and to explore ways of encouraging those who did not use the services to do so. It was requested that these issues should be explored in greater detail.

It was also suggested that the team could work with the travel mentoring service, to gather more information on the experience of disabled customers, and to better understand the barriers to accessing the network. Mark Evers agreed to look at the channels available, to raise awareness of services and support available for disabled customers. **[Action: Mark Evers]**

The team had carried out a significant amount of work with focus groups to gather qualitative evidence, to better understand the care score and to understand the barriers to access. Officers recognised the need to carry out more detailed work to gain a greater understanding of the score and to support all users of the network, as part of TfL's Action on Inclusion priorities, particularly in relation to female customers. Members suggested that the team further explore the long-term trends to identify what is driving the significant trends over time including the trends for the female customer care score identified in the presentation. This would be covered in future reports.

Further details would be provided on the sample size of the disabled customers surveyed. **[Action: Mark Evers]**

TfL had carried out research called "Confidence and post pandemic experience for disabled customers" May 2022. A copy of the report would be provided to the Panel along with an executive summary. **[Action: Mark Evers]**

The Panel noted the need to focus on the supporting customers when things go wrong measure, to lift the care score and to learn lessons from this. TfL was in the process of improving its response to such circumstances through, for example, improving the way it provided information in such situations on the TfL Go app. This remained a key area of focus. Details would be provided to the Panel on TfL's staff training accreditation programme and the benchmarking information for training. **[Action: Glynn Barton]**

It was agreed that this report should be presented to the Panel on an annual basis, with a focus on the work to address the gaps in the scores. **[Action: Mark Evers]**

The Panel noted the paper.

34/10/23 Elizabeth Line Performance

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Sophie Bancroft, Operations Director, Network Rail.

Howard Smith introduced the paper, which provided the first update on the Elizabeth line operational performance covering the period since the introduction of the final staged opening timetable on 21 May 2023.

The key benefits of the new timetable included the provision of 24, rather than 22, trains per hour between Paddington and Whitechapel at peak times and the improved services on the Shenfield line to Heathrow Terminal 5.

Passenger numbers had continued to grow and on Thursday 28 September 2023, there were 738,000 journeys with 4.5 million trips in the week. Good progress continued to be made with addressing the key issues in relation to the central section and the reliability of trains. Reviews of each major incident had been completed and actions implemented, both to address the root causes and to speed response and recovery, when these relatively infrequent incidents occur.

TfL continued to work with Network Rail and all parties to improve performance, particularly in relation to the western part of the Elizabeth line. The line comprised a mix of assets and there would be a long-term programme of renewals to address these matters. The Panel noted the update from Sophie Bancroft about the nature of the mitigation in place to respond to problems quickly, and to generally improve performance. Examples highlighted included the installation of monitoring equipment (including additional void metres to measure track movements) to identify problems at an early stage. They had also worked to address issues with axle counters, and had introduced more first responders to improve response times. Network Rail had also established a new performance working group with TfL and others. The Panel welcomed these improvements.

Levels of customer satisfaction remained very positive at 82 per cent in Quarter 2 of 2023/24 and remained a key area of focus.

The Panel emphasised the importance of providing a good service when things go wrong. It was noted that good progress had been made with initiatives to support this, including providing customer information at such times. It was also noted that Network Rail had put in place measures to further improve customer service.

The Panel requested more granular details of the disaggregated survey results for customer experience, including those affecting customers travelling outside of London.
[Action: Howard Smith]

The Panel commented on the need to provide further information to the public on fares along the Elizabeth line, especially where the fares were non-standard (such as along the route for Heathrow), and to also look at ways of promoting the line's value for money.

It was also suggested that Officers should review the approach to train time announcements, with a view to standardising the approach more consistently with London Underground.

The Panel discussed the need to improve wayfinding for Elizabeth line services at stations that also operated National Rail services (signage and electronic boards). Members also discussed the issue of staff training to help customers navigate the services at such stations. These matters would be covered in the next report.

The Panel noted the paper.

35/10/23 Step-Free Access Update

David Rowe presented the update on London Underground step-free access, following the informal briefing in March 2023.

In July 2023, TfL confirmed the 10 stations being assessed to understand the best way to deliver step-free upgrades. For each of the eight stations being taken through feasibility (Alpertown, Arncliffe, Eastcote, Finchley Road, North Acton, Rayners Lane, West Hampstead and White City), the team was developing single preferred options which would be taken to the next stage of design.

At Burnt Oak and Northolt the previous designs were currently being reviewed, together with updated construction strategies, programmes and costs. This would facilitate the decision on whether to take one or both schemes into construction in 2024.

Progress also continued to be made with a series of other improvements to provide step-free access at Leyton, Colindale, Knightsbridge, Paddington and Elephant & Castle.

The paper provided an overview of the study of the southern branch of the Northern line, to address the deficit that existed in step-free access. However, due to the nature of the structure of these stations they would be expensive and difficult to adapt.

The paper also included details of the wider improvements to improve accessibility, such as through the provision of better accessible features in the TfL Go app, as well as the lifts programme. The team had engaged with groups such as TravelWatch and Age UK to help TfL refine the approach to making appropriate adaptations.

It was noted that TfL had engaged with all London boroughs, at a senior level, on the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 funding for step-free access. TfL continues to work with its commercial property company, Places for London to align priorities regarding step-free access.

The Panel expressed support for the programme and urged that steps should be taken to maximise the provision of step-free access, including the provision of lifts and escalators and other features to improve accessibility. This work was considered critical to designing an accessible network and removing barriers to the use of the services.

This report would be presented to the Panel on an annual basis.

The Panel noted the paper.

36/10/23 Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Complaints Update

Helen Chapman introduced the paper, which provided an update on volume and trends in complaints received on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) services. Over the previous year there had been a significant increase in demand for taxi and PHV services and in the volume of complaints.

Driver behaviour, dangerous driving and fare complaints were the most common themes for customer complaints about both taxi and PHV services. All complaints were taken seriously and investigated. For complaints that fall outside of its regulatory remit, TfL ensured that the customer was advised of the relevant Local Authority or entity that was best placed to assist them.

TfL was currently reviewing its end-to-end complaints procedure, to ensure the appropriate action was taken, including ensuring the statutory standards for taxi and PHV licensing were fully met. Officers were currently considering the responses, with a

view to making recommendations to the Commissioner, and were also looking to consider further proposals on safety following the review.

The Panel sought further details on the number of complaints relating to the refusal to carry assistance animals, such as guide dogs, and the complaints process for this. Further information was also sought on the complaints process and the number of complaints from Taxicard users.

[Action: Helen Chapman]

TfL recognised the importance of assisting vulnerable customers and had processes in place to make raising issues as easy and accessible as possible. Further information would be provided on the ways such customers could contact TfL for all modes of transport, as well as information regarding the number of complaints and outcomes.

[Action: Emma Strain]

The Panel noted the paper.

37/10/23 Members' Suggestions for Future Discussion Items

Shamus Kenny introduced the current forward plan for the Panel. No additional suggestions were raised for future items on the forward plan or for informal briefings, other than those already noted during the meeting.

The Panel noted the forward plan.


38/10/23 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

There was no other urgent business to discuss.

39/10/23 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Panel would be held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 1.00pm.

The meeting closed at 1:40pm.

Chair: 

Date: 5th Nov. 2023

