

Board meeting

Date: Thursday 14 January 2016
Location: Fleetbank House, London
Time: 09.30 – 11.58

Present

Board Members

Jeff Halliwell	JH	Chair
Dr Stuart Burgess CBE	SB	
Marian Lauder MBE	ML	
Bob Linnard	BL	
Stephen Locke	SL	
Theo de Pencier	TdP	
Diane McCrea MBE	DM	
Isabel Liu	IL	
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	
Paul Rowan	PR	

Executive in attendance

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Mike Hewitson	MH	Head of Policy and Issues
David Sidebottom	DS	Passenger Director
Guy Dangerfield	GD	Road User Director
Michelle Calvert	MC	Business Services Executive
Nigel Holden	NH	Resources Director
Vivienne Carter	VC	Change Manager
Douglas Dalziel	DD	Head of Business Innovation
Sara Nelson	SN	Head of Communications

Guest Speakers

Nina Howe	NiH	Passenger Manager, Transport Focus
Keith Bailey	KB	Senior Insight Advisor, Transport Focus

Minutes

Part A: Preliminary

1.0 Chair's opening remarks; apologies

No apologies were received.

2.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board **approved** the minutes and **authorised** the Chairman to sign them, subject to some minor changes.

The Board **approved** the minutes of the private session and **authorised** the Chairman to sign them.

3.0 Board action matrix

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM 249	13/11/14	NRPS retender	Produce deliverable programme for successful retendering in one year's time.	IW	Nov 2015	Complete. Delete
BM 251	12/02/15	Board Membership Code	Update the Board Membership Code to further take into account potential conflicts of interest in relation to our additional remit	JC	Nov 2015	JC noted his gratitude to PM and IL for their help on the redevelopment of the code of conduct which had made progress. The first issue had been to make a provision for roads and highways, and the second issue was to tidy it up and make it simpler and more concise. ARAC had considered it, and was happy for it to be submitted to the DfT and would go out to the Board again upon its return. Ongoing

4.0 Chair's report

JH had been involved in a variety of stakeholder meetings, including with Bus Users UK, the Labour Transport spokesperson, the UK cards' association meeting at the House of Commons, and the new head

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of the Rail Executive at the Department for Transport (DfT). JH had been engaged in the funding delivery group. AS and JH had an upcoming meeting with the RMT.

4.1 Chief Executive's report

AS had been at the inaugural meeting of the Urban Transport Group the previous day. It had been the meeting of all director generals of the Passenger Transport Executives across the West Midlands and the North. TfL had become a full member. He had spoken to them about Transport Focus's current work. There had been many questions about Transport Focus's work on the strategic roads network (SRN) and the funding it received. It had been a good opportunity to set out Transport Focus's remit to an increasingly important group of stakeholders. They had been particularly interested in Smart Ticketing in the North, for which Transport Focus had conducted research in March.

The New Year's fare rise had been relatively muted this year, as it was an inflation-only rise. This had been helped by the majority of the railway engineering works having gone well. Flooding continued to cause problems. The West Coast Main Line was still severed between Carlisle and Scotland.

SL noted that there had been an increase in winter rainfall over the past 20 years and what might have been considered resilient 20 years ago might not be so now. AS said this needed to be taken account of in the next five years' spending on the railway.

Regarding London Bridge and the Southern Thameslink Gatwick Express (GTR) franchise, there had been a worsening of performance in the run up to Christmas. Transport Focus hoped to publish the emotional feedback it had tracked after the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) results in late January. It was working with Go Ahead Group, and London Travel Watch. The challenge for the railways over the next 18 months was to restore confidence and trust.

IL noted that in this case there was a combination of protracted works compounded by franchise operators' own inadequate operational delivery. She asked at what point DfT should act on a company's inadequate performance and either impose penalties, specific remedies or seriously consider replacing the franchise operator. MH explained that performance targets, where written into contracts, are based on its delayed minutes and not those caused by Network Rail. There would be targets for train failures and staff shortages as well, and ultimately the contract could be taken away from them, but we were still a long way off such a situation.

AS said that Network Rail's assessment of the capability of the network had been proven completely wrong, from which everything else had flowed. Changing the top three people was unlikely to make much of a difference to this situation in the short term. They had taken on something absurdly over-ambitious. The timetable needed to be rewritten to be more realistic.

AS said contractual arrangements between Northern Rail and the operators were not public and DfT were not interested in making them so. There should have been an open discussion about the options for the entire London Bridge project. Transparency needed to be the industry's priority, looking forward to Waterloo, Euston and Glasgow Queen Street.

The next NRPS would be published on 27 January. DS said the Northern and TransPennine franchises had made a commitment to additional staffing at transport Focus which would help with capacity. MH said the ORR had asked to join in with Transport Focus's research on delays and compensation.

GD said that, regarding Operation Stack consultation and potential research, there had been positive visits in Swansea with the DVLA, who would likely help in providing the group for the survey. There had also been progress with the main road user survey.

Part B: Public Affairs

1.0 Planned Rail Engineering Work – the Passenger Perspective

KB said that printed copies of this presentation and the corresponding research were available and had been distributed amongst the relevant parties. Developments in Reading had been ongoing for over six years and research on it had first been conducted in 2010 when there had been a Christmas blockade. The recent Easter blockade had shown that the passenger experience of such blockades had been improved. Research showed that people preferred to take a diverted route on the same train rather than changing to a bus. Transport Focus had started collaborating with Great Western Railway (GWR) early on so that communication material could be reviewed.

Transport Focus had started with a benchmark of 'normal' and had measured satisfaction and awareness of the works. That had been the first indication to GWR that the message had not been heard and that it needed to improve its communications. Awareness of the works during the campaign had not risen to the expected levels. Transport Focus had then conducted research during the disruption. The initial qualitative research had shown a hierarchy of passengers' priorities: they wanted to know when there would be disruption; on which lines in particular; on which dates in particular; the expected delay; alternative arrangements; and why the work was happening. There was a tendency for rail companies to look at this in reverse order. Business and leisure travellers were typically more open to high-level information, but commuters really wanted to know the details.

JH suggested that electrification was not a benefit in itself and the benefit of faster journey times needed to be communicated to passengers. KB noted that high-level information had been successfully communicated, but knowledge of interim travel disruption needed to be better shared.

KB summarised the findings. Awareness of works had increased significantly; by the time the works had started, 84% of passengers had been aware. Station information was the key means of communicating information. There had been better satisfaction with the information communicated. People understood the need for work. Although people did not want bus replacement services, those who had taken them had reported that they had had a good experience. Railway companies should work to communicate that the experience was good, through adjusting terminology from bus to coach. Journey satisfaction had decreased during the works but levels of trust had remained stable.

NiH said that this research had helped Transport Focus make a number of observations. From a delay-handling perspective, passengers had been broadly happy with how the works had been handled. It had been reported that when there had been problems there had been enough staff around to help. Those

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on regional routes who had used buses had registered a much higher satisfaction with delay-handling, although their overall journey satisfaction had been lower. Awareness had been building throughout and had been fairly consistent. A contributing factor to low satisfaction was that the train plan had been very late in being confirmed so the communications team had not had access to more detailed, advance information. Once that had been delivered satisfaction levels had been high. This demonstrated the need for communications and train plans to be delivered early in the planning process.

Transport Focus had made a number of recommendations based on this research. The key message from passengers was that they wanted to know how it affected them and their journey. The implication of that was that there could not be a one-size-fits-all approach to engineering works. The impact of engineering work on passengers needed to be given greater thought, noting the differences between weekend and weekday passengers. Commuters wanted earlier, more detailed information so messages needed to be tailored. This needed to be built into the planning process. In terms of information channels, preferences depended on passenger types. Station posters were strong in reaching passengers, which GWR had found surprising.

The research had very good traction in GWR at a high level. Project teams had been very engaged and responded tactically to research. Strategically, Transport Focus had been able to influence their communications strategy, which they had just rewritten. As mentioned, 2016 would be full of engineering works on the GWR lines. At Didcot there would be seven Sunday closures over February and March. The section between Bath and Bristol would necessitate a nine-day closure in April. There were three-week flood works in Hinksey in July and August. Severn Tunnel works would take many weeks. There would be more engineering works at Paddington at Christmas.

Lessons learned for Network Rail included the importance of timetabling and passenger needs as well as engineering needs. In terms of other train operators, research had been shared widely to ensure the recommendations were taken up. There were early plans for an industry summit to share best practice.

Q&A

JH asked whether the upcoming work in Scotland would be incorporated in the industry summit, and what learnings there were regarding roads from this research project. NiH said that planning for the summit was in the very early stages so all best practice possible would be incorporated. GD said that regarding the applicability to roads, Transport Focus was about to start work on understanding road-users experiences and needs during delays.

PR said that GWR had paid for a member of staff to work alongside Transport Focus to inform the process as it happened. The influence it had had in Bath Spa compared to Reading was notable. Transport Focus had had significant input into how communication had gone. That point needed to be enforced. He asked about the use of social media. NiH said that they had a very strong Twitter team. KB said it worked tactically during the works but it was not as helpful for communicating notice in advance.

PM said he had been attending forums dealing with the issues in Queen Street Railway Station in Glasgow. He had been taken by the point that KB had made about passengers not being able to understand the diagrams. Research could be conducted in March in time for the due start of August. He asked whether Transport Focus had the capacity for that research. GD had been invited to talk to ScotRail about

passenger information during disruption, which was another opportunity to expand work. DS said that it could do some work for Scotland subject to cost and time available.

1516-253	14/01/2016	Research in Scotland	Discuss and agree the possibility of conducting research in Scotland on diagrams with PM and ScotRail and report back	DS	March 2016
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SB said that the recommendation of tailoring the message was critical in helping passengers to understand the works. He added that he was very amused the feedback of a female commuter who had said, 'It was a pity Brunel had not planned for electric railways.'

SL said that TfL could be interested in getting involved or attending the summit considering the work at London Bridge. TFL could be interested in improving communications through using Oyster Card details to contact people about disruptions. There was a potential for user groups for research too.

TdP expressed his support for the industry summit. GD noted that It was important to recognise the money GWR had invested in this research as well as NiH's work.

ML emphasised that this needed to be planned to ensure it resurfaced when engineering works started. AS said it should not be pitched as being 'about GWR' but about the lessons learned.

2.0 HGV Drivers' Priorities for Improvement

GD said that this research had been published and disseminated widely before Christmas. The top five issues were common across all the three segments of road users: quality of road surface, safe design and upkeep of roads, better-behaved drivers, better roadworks management, and better unplanned-incidents management. This highlighted the need to better understand the aspects of road surface quality that were road-users' priority.

Q&A

AS said that the reaction from DfT and Highways England and the Freight Transport Association had been muted almost to the extent of disinterest in the HGV work. GD said that there had been some surprise that, from a representative sample of the users for the Strategic Road Network, their priorities did not seem to be what people had historically assumed they would be. Transport Focus was confident this was the true picture. This was because users typically made relatively short-distance trips and rarely encountered disruptions. The surface was regarded as the product. These companies needed to review whether they focused improvements on what they regarded as priorities or what the customer regarded as priorities.

IL asked where the sample had been sourced. GD said participants were recruited from commercial research panels and then asked whether they had used the Strategic Road Network within a recent period. It had not involved NRUSS or DVLA respondents.

TdP said that managers and logistics planners had a different perspective to road users. PM observed that there were a number of different levels of user of the Strategic Road Network.

ML asked how it had been ensured that car drivers' priorities as mentioned here were specifically about the Strategic Road Networks and not local roads. GD said that participants had been recruited specifically for that and questions had been asked to tease out whether they had used the Strategic Road Network. There had been a question also about local roads, which had yielded very different answers. AS asked GD to write this down and circulate it.

1516-254	14/01/2016	SRN	Produce and circulate a concise guide to the Strategic Road Network	GD	March 2016
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3.0 The Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) Centro Area Results – Spring 2015

DS said that this was a piece of work conducted with Centro and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). It was a replica of Transport Focus's BPS but WMCA paid for it twice a year. This formed part of the partnership arrangement between a number of transport companies. It had been running for four years. It reflected the usefulness of BPS and the strength of the working relationship Transport Focus had with Centro and the bus operators in the West Midlands. This formed part of a separate working group chaired by transport authority members. LM sat on that group. Results had been improving in the past two years and had been stabilising. Punctuality and bus driver attitude had both been improving. Antisocial behaviour had also been a focus and there had been a slight increase recently but an overall improvement. Research was carried out in spring and published in late summer.

Q&A

BL asked whether Centro got the results broken down by company and asked how they compared results. DS said they did get the results broken down. Stagecoach tended to perform better overall.

PR asked if the issue of value for money and satisfaction had been raised with Centro. DS said that value-for-money ratings tended to compare spring-to-spring. Fares would be a challenge and had increased from January. New vehicles had been invested in.

DM thought this was a great report. She would like to present this in Wales where it could be very beneficial. DS said that a summary would be forming part of their work, which would be available in spring. Centro and Transport Focus and others had been working on this for five years and it should be rolled out to other areas.

1516-255	14/01/2016	BPS	Prepare a version of the BPS Centro Area Results report for discussions in Wales	DS	March 2016
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Part C: Work plan report

1.1 AS said that they were nearing the year-end. The work on punctuality had been stressed in the priorities for improvement and other upcoming work. DS said a summary of findings would be produced and negotiations were ongoing about the best way to package and distribute it in time for April. This would be carried forward in the following year. PR noted that the data shared last week had shown how priorities needed to be reviewed. DS said that Stagecoach had spent £8 million a year on its fleet to maintain a

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decent timetable and performance was still declining. Significant bus priority schemes were being implemented in some cities. SL noted that London had seen a decline in bus usage.

1.2 Identifying road users' priorities had been completed.

2.1 MH said the rail franchise replacement was busy. East Anglia bid reviews and West Coast had been pushed back; the South West consultation responses would be submitted soon. Research had been published. Compensation research was being funded out of the franchise budget.

3.1 DS said that 40,000 passengers had been reached in the BPS, under the 50,000 target. Robert Payne was analysing results. Results would be taken to operators and authorities in March through over 30 meetings.

3.2 AS said the NRPS rebuild was going well. Transport Focus was hoping to be included in the East Anglia route's new Wi-Fi system. The costs of the BPS and Tram Passenger Survey (TPS) were too high. Transport Focus needed to develop a low-cost entry product affordable to virtually anybody.

3.3 GD and IW would update this section after the Swansea meeting.

4.1 DS said the end of December Customer Satisfaction results would be analysed this week. It was likely to be just ahead of this year's target of 70%.

Part D: Corporate Affairs

1.0 To receive and endorse minutes of meetings:

1.1 Statistics Governance Group 17.12.15

SL said the main issue was the NRPS consultation exercise, which had made good progress. The results of the consultation had been published. The immediate issues were the spring 2016 pilots which would be used to trial the initial changes and test concerns that had been raised through the consultation. Findings from the spring pilots would be built into the new tender. The proposed stakeholder forum meetings was scheduled for 18 February. The smaller and more tightly focused expert advisory panel had started meeting.

JH, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Statistics Governance Group and all those who had helped in the work.

1.0 Workplan 2016-17

AS said that some progress had been made in drafting this but it was difficult due to funding uncertainties. AS asked for comments, especially about the introduction, including the funding issue and the indicative seven key objectives. The next version would be more detailed and presented at the February meeting.

BL noted that there was an objective for the BPS but not for NRPS, which was arguably Transport Focus's more important work.

IL noted that the introductory remarks included Transport Focus’s plan to digitise, which did not seem like an appropriate priority, as it was not an end in itself. AS said that it was a crude reflection of what had been in the Treasury instructions, which had dictated that this would be a cost-saving device if rolled out across Transport Focus. IL said that in the third paragraph ‘other key companies’ should be amended to ‘other key stakeholders.’

SL asked whether the Board thought that ‘ensuring that passenger voice in times of disruption’ was sufficiently emphasised. Transport Focus spent a lot of time and effort on this and that should be better communicated. It also needed to review what level of activity it committed to and not promise what it could not deliver. Some things needed to be square bracketed as dependent on funding. AS said that the split between core and additional was an attempt at that, but it needed to be improved.

PM said this funding issue was vital. It had to be transparent. It should not be hidden. Core and non-core activity needed to be clearly outlined. Not all the activity listed as core could be completed and a discretionary column should be added. PR agreed with PM. Other organisations needed to pay for services they wanted. Objective 1 and objective 6 could be combined. The 50,000 target needed to be reviewed. The objectives should be followed by the commentary. Some wording needed tweaking.

1516-256	14/01/2016	Workplan 2016-17	Revise the Workplan to make distinctions between what TF considers it must do and what it chooses to do	AS	March 2016
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ML suggested there should be a section noting how Transport Focus intended to run itself, the standards to which it would operate and the kind of employer it aspired to be. IL said that points about how it internally communicated and governed itself and employees could be better emphasised.

1516-257	14/01/2016	Workplan 2016-17	Create section on how Transport Focus intends to run itself, the standards to which it will operate and the kind of employer it aspires to be, how it internally communicates and governs itself and its employees	AS	March 2016
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TdP said that in the introduction that the term ‘road users’ should be used. In objective 2 under rail, charging for analysis should be noted explicitly. In objective 3 there were some points that needed to be carried over. He asked whether objective 6 had been completed. AS confirmed that it had.

SB asked whether evidence and research could be emphasised more in the introduction. A great deal of its budget was spent on this.

AS said that accounts would be run differently in future to reflect these structural changes. Time sheets would be implemented. JH thanked people for their input and noted that this was an early draft. The change in funding had a significant impact not just for the upcoming year but after then too. The next draft would be sent electronically.

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2.0 Project Q53 – South East Quadrant Emotional Response: Full Project Update

AS said that the initial decision about the emotional tracker project saw the Board extend funding into next financial year. Considering funding changes it would be risky to commit to this. It would commit until 31 March, beyond which there would have to be discussions about funding it further. It would be able to fund this until that date. The Board agreed to the recommendations in the paper on this subject.

4.0 AOB

The next meeting would be at 12.00 on 11 February where we shall be joined by Charles Horton, CEO of Greater Thameslink Railway.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Jeff Halliwell
Chair, Transport Focus

Date