

Minutes

Board meeting

Date: Wednesday 22 February 2012
Location: One Drummond Gate,
 Pimlico, London
 SW1V 2QY
Time: 14.00 – 15.45

Present

Board Members

Colin Foxall CBE	CF	Chairman
David Burton	DB	
David Leibling	DL	
Stella Mair Thomas	SMT	
Deryk Mead CBE	DM	
Bill Samuel	BS	
Barbara Saunders OBE	BSa	
Nigel Walmsley	NW	

Board Bus Advisors

Mike Parker	MP	
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Executive in attendance

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
David Sidebottom	DS	Passenger Team Director
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Research
Mike Hewitson	MH	Head of Passenger Issues
Matt Ayson	MA	Business Services Executive

Apologies

Gavin Booth	GB	Board Bus Advisor
Professor Jim Gallacher	JG	Board Member

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1 Chairman's Opening Remarks; Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting. There were apologies from GB and JG.

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2 Minutes of the Previous Board Meeting

The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting and **authorised** the Chairman to sign them.

3 Action Matrix

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM184	14/09/11	Connect access for Board members	Board members to be given access to Connect	Nigel Holden	Nov 2011	Arrangements have been made. Complete. Delete.
BM187	14/09/11	Timetable consultations	Consider developing best practice toolkit on how to best consult with passengers on timetabling changes	Mike Hewitson	April 2012	Not in work plan for 2011-12. To be considered as part of work plan 2012-13.
BM190	14/09/11	Passenger contact reports	Arrangements to be put in place to distribute to the Board monthly	David Sidebottom	Dec 2011	Arrangements in place and reports have been circulated. Complete. Delete.
BM191	14/09/11	TOC complaint stats	Annual account of individual TOCs complaint results to be sent to Managing Directors.	Anthony Smith	Apr 2012	To be completed at end of the financial year.
BM193	9/11/11	Passenger Focus success and work streams	Develop bullet point summary of past success and current work streams	Anthony Smith	21 Nov 2011	Developed for meeting with Theresa Villiers on 23 Nov 2011. Complete. Delete.
BM194	9/11/11	Corporate/ business plan	Circulate strategic intents and high end outputs for discussion at December 2011 Members' event	Anthony Smith	Dec 2011	Circulated and discussed at Dec 2011 Members' Event. Complete. Delete.
BM195	9/11/11	New Passenger Focus website proposal	Paper for discussion at Dec 2011 Members' event. To include past website traffic statistics and future monitoring.	Amy Bradley	Dec 2011	Circulated and discussed at Dec 2011 Members' event. Complete. Delete.
BM196	9/11/11	NRES research	Distribute to the Board by email.	Ian Wright	Nov 2011	Circulated by email on 25 Nov 2011. Complete. Delete.

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BM197	9/11/11	Unplanned disruption – cable theft	Review of SWT and Network Rail’s actions following 9 June to be circulated to the Board.	Mike Hewitson	Jan 2012	Has been circulated to the Board. Complete. Delete.
BM198	9/11/11	Unplanned disruption	SWT and Network Rail to be invited to future Board meeting to explain progress in implementing John Curley’s recommendations.	Anthony Smith	April 2012	AS and Guy Dangerfield have met with SWT and NR to discuss this issue. AS is to circulate a note to the Board outlining the discussion.
BM199	9/11/11	Planned disruption	Develop a planned response when measures have demonstrated industry failure and discuss with Network Rail	Anthony Smith	Jan 2012	AS requested that this be removed from the Board action matrix in light of previous discussions with Network Rail. Complete. Delete.
BM200	09/11/11	East Coast complaints	Letter to be prepared to send to Elaine Holt at East Coast	David Sidebottom	Nov 2011	Complete. Delete.
BM201	09/11/11	‘Case of the Week’ publication	Ensure ‘Case of the week’ trigger is sent to Executive	Katie Armstrong	Nov 2011	Complete. Delete.
BM202	09/11/11	Diversity and inclusion Training	Date for Board attendance at Diversity and Inclusion training	Jon Carter	June 2012	On draft agenda for June 2012 Members event.

With reference to **BM198**, AS reported that he and Guy Dangerfield had attended a meeting with South West Trains (SWT) where they discussed the alliance between Network Rail and SWT to improve the way that unplanned disruption is handled. A note of this discussion would be circulated to the Board.

The Chairman stressed the importance for Passenger Focus to continue to be involved in these discussions to ensure passengers’ interests were being represented and to have a presence in the media.

4 Chairman’s Report

The Chairman reported that he and AS had a positive in-depth meeting with the new Secretary of State for Transport. Of particular note was her interest in Passenger Focus’s views on the upcoming fares review. The Secretary of State was now fully briefed on the unfairness of the current fares basket system and was interested in the complaints relayed by passengers; she had been urged to take action and Passenger

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Focus would be writing to her with further details. The Secretary of State agreed to meet with Passenger Focus regularly going forward.

The Chairman **noted** that some clarity was emerging on the issues likely to be raised by the Command paper dealing with the recommendations from the McNulty report. It was also expected the HLOS in July could provide clarity on contentious themes, but little was as yet laid out in detail. Much of Passenger Focus' research would be referenced in the associated fares and devolution papers.

On Network Rail governance, Passenger Focus had not been involved in any debate around bonuses as it ultimately was not relevant to what could be achieved for passengers.

The Chairman **noted** that there had not been sufficiently serious bad weather to properly research the industry's progress in implementing improvements identified during last year's review of unplanned disruption caused by severe weather.

AS reported that a potential tenant had been found for Passenger Focus's current accommodation in London, One Drummond Gate and approval had been given to move to new premises near Fleet Street, which was smaller and cost less. These costs had been built into the 2012/13 budget and additional transition funding had been secured. BSa declared an interest that she had previously worked with the Chairman of the proposed tenant. Passenger Focus could remain at Drummond Gate until the end of the year if necessary. The Chairman stated Passenger Focus had acted as proactively as it could and if the project fell through it would be for reasons outside of its control.

Passenger Focus was currently recruiting replacement Board members. The plan was to recruit three plus one Scottish member in 2012 and three plus a new Chairman in 2013. JC reported that advertisements for the Scottish appointment would appear on 24 February and the further advertisements the following week. Passenger Focus was managing this campaign on behalf of the DfT and Transport Scotland.

The Chairman stated that it had been confirmed that the powers of the Public Bodies Act would not be used in relation to Passenger Focus; Scotland and Wales would remain part of the remit and constitution. The budget, though, had been tailored to England alone so Passenger Focus would have to bid for further funding. The Board would be kept informed.

5 Chief Executive's Work Plan Report

AS presented the Chief Executives work plan report, which was **noted** by the Board.

With regard to research, IW outlined that currently there was a lot of franchise retender work ongoing and that the winter disruption research had been put on hold for the immediate future, as **noted** in the Chairman's report.

In terms of the future trends work, an appraisal of the first stage indicated that research with the Go Ahead Group was progressing well. This research was moving into the second stage, narrowing down to transport-specific micro-trends. There would then be a final internal workshop, followed by a report being

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published in March, with findings initially being planned to be available at Passenger Focus's Board and staff away day. The Chairman commented that Go Ahead was enhancing their reputation by working with Passenger Focus on this research which will be of great value to the industry.

Regarding the fares and ticketing desk research, DL asked about the extent to which national comparisons on fares strategy could be extracted. IW explained that Passenger Focus would only conduct such comparisons in terms of specific parts of services that were relevant; MVA Consultancy had been appointed, and had been given this direction. There would be an in-depth interview with a key player in each market to better understand how fares and ticketing structures had evolved. Passenger Focus had undertaken considerable research into fare levels in 2009, but current research focused more on fare structures and ticketing.

Work on databasing the impact of cuts to local bus services had stopped in May 2011. The Board considered using online bus tables as a data point, but the Chairman stated that they no longer had sufficient resource for such a huge task. Regarding the development of a 'best practice' consultation tool kit for local authorities, as recommended by the Transport Select Committee, DS said a final draft had been sent to the DfT, who had advised to circulate it after Purdah. The Chairman thought such practical action was genuinely useful, and ought to continue.

The Board **noted** the quarter three research report for 2011/12. BSa expressed concern at the quantity of work and thought more granularity of detail was necessary to fully understand it.

With regards to communications, the Board noted that the tender for Passenger Focus's new website was in its final stages. The winning bidder will be announced to the Board shortly.

SMT asked why two posts had been made redundant in the passenger team. DS explained that two people were not necessary, to do what was essentially a one person post and that the staff members involved felt that the scope of the role was not as expected. The reduction had been part of the original change business case, but had required further consideration.

In relation to transparency data, it was noted that Passenger Focus had dealt with an increase in queries, as had other public bodies.

The Board **noted** the quarter three finance report for 2011/12.

6 Review of National Passenger Issues for Q3

DS reported that initial analysis from the bus, coach and tram punctuality project would be available in July 2012. After which, a series of operational 'best practice' tool kits on how operators can improve and deliver sustained punctuality to bus services will be developed and shared.

On rail accountability, Passenger Focus had responded to the Cabinet offices open data consultation, emphasising the findings of research with passengers. Passenger Focus had hosted an open data in transport seminar, which was chaired by BSa. This event was attended by a number of stakeholders within

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the rail industry. A scene setting presentation was also given at a co-hosted event with Consumer Focus on open data for 'app' developers.

There was nothing to report to the Board in terms of unplanned disruption. With regard to planned disruption, MH reported that the qualitative phase of research into passengers' attitudes to and needs during planned engineering related disruption reconfirmed that passengers still preferred a diverted train to a replacement bus. The Chairman noted that Reading station had received an award for best managed rail project. Passenger Focus had been a major influence on that project. However, there were concerns that the Reading model would be imitated indiscriminately. There was now acceptance that, for a project to be done well, it needed adequate resourcing, which was positive. The Board questioned how the siloed approach of train operating companies could be overcome to enable free flow of such information between them. MH thought when new targets were in place information would filter down.

With regard to fares, Passenger Focus was awaiting the outcome of the DfT's Fares and Ticketing Review. AS reported that the BBC's *Panorama* programme on fares was a poor representation of Passenger Focus' position.

Passenger Focus was actively engaged on national issues such as HLOS and franchising. AS thanked the Board members who were assisting on the franchise work.

7 Review of Passenger and Industry-Facing Work

DS focused on the matter of establishing clearly defined stakeholder relationships, particularly with passengers groups. Rather than involving itself in local issues, Passenger Focus wanted to enable local passenger groups to do their job better – for instance, in terms of lobbying and accessing Passenger Focus research. Most important was that local groups could share information amongst themselves.

In enabling this, Passenger Focus would be holding road shows, the next of which was scheduled for 2 March in London and is to be co-hosted with London Travel Watch. These events are designed to help local passenger groups better understand Passenger Focus's new structure and work plan objectives and share ideas on how they can best communicate with each other to share ideas on how to make a difference locally and recruit new members, of which there were potentially many. It was noted that a major challenge for local passenger groups was that of adapting to the future; the Chairman added that formal groups were slowly being replaced by informal ones such as FixMyTransport. DS agreed to circulate a schedule of these events to the Board.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due
BM203	22/02/12	Passenger group events	Circulate a schedule of events to the Board	David Sidebottom	Mar 2012

DS outlined the 'Your Bus Matters' bus passenger events which were conducted with Bus Users UK (BUUK) in ten events across England, most recently in Swindon, Sheffield and Oxford. Passenger Focus provided strategic support to BUUK with the aim of obtaining more informed responses from passengers,

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which could be used to influence improvements. A summary of these events would be produced, and could be circulated to the trade press.

DS reported that the number of rail appeals received from passengers had increased significantly. At present, East Coast Trains amounted to a third of all appeals received, which the Board **noted** and expressed their disappointment. If Passenger Focus did not see any progress with East Coast they would go public. DS reported that the increase in appeals started when East Coast outsourced its complaint handling, with the majority of complaints being about complaints. Following discussion with Karen Boswell, East Coast MD, AS had ascertained that there were difficulties with their outsourcing partner.

The number of current cases did present a challenge, but the spirit of the passenger team was good and they were trying to flush out issues with East Coast Trains by providing greater focus. Despite the increase in appeals, passenger satisfaction scores with the service Passenger Focus is providing has been increasing, as cases are being passed on more quickly as a result of changes implemented as part of the passenger contact review. Case logging is no longer directly linked to the TOCs, which had also smoothed the allocation of work.

Now that passenger contacts were logged more systematically, Passenger Focus received a fuller picture of total contacts. Previously redirected contacts had sometimes gone under the radar.

Matters for Discussion/Approval

8 Audit Committee Minutes

BS outlined that across Whitehall, Departments were looking at how internal audit services should be provided; the Audit Committee had asked the Head of Internal Audit at the DfT to attend the next meeting to discuss the matter further.

The Committee had been concerned with the London accommodation issue, but this matter was nearing a conclusion. The Committee had **noted** the outcome of the Corporate Governance and Risk Audit and would discuss its implications with the Board in March. There were no serious issues to report from the revised risk management system.

BS reported that the Audit Committee were currently reviewing its own effectiveness and would be making recommendations to the Board in its annual report. The Board **noted** that it would soon be asked to complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback on its activities and effectiveness; the Chairman asked to see the proforma to be used before proceeding.

The Board thanked the Audit Committee for its work and **endorsed** the minutes.

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Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due
BM204	22/02/12	Questionnaire on Board activities and effectiveness	Circulate draft to the Chairman for comments before use.	Jon Carter	March 2012

9 Statistics Governance Group Minutes

The Chairman reported that the proposals for the review of the NPS questionnaire had been only partly accepted. The SGG wanted accurate, clean and independent views about passengers' experiences; the report lent too far in the direction of covering general views about rail travel. The Group had agreed to a range of enhancements, which they would introduce while seeking to maintain comparability with previous waves of research. The Chairman stressed that the Group would resist any major changes to the fundamental nature of the NPS through extensive modification of the survey.

The Board **endorsed** the minutes.

10 Work Plan 2012-13

AS reported that the draft work plan for 2012-13 had rebalanced Passenger Focus' work to focus more on buses and that following the Public Bodies Act Passenger Focus could now make more emphatic decisions about Scotland and Wales, which are still to be added.

In recognition of how often circumstances could change, the work plan did not specify the division of resources into each category; funding for different areas could be altered without compromising the overall structure. However, each team had developed detailed plans outlining how they will contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the work plan, with which they were comfortable.

It would not have been a worthwhile use of time to draw up an entirely new mission statement, but there had been slight tweaks to the Passenger Focus's values. The Chairman stated that the threefold mantra of being useful, evidence-based and consumer-oriented should be recognised in the priorities. AS said this would be reflected in the wording.

The Board expressed concerns around the vagueness of some of the commitments; stronger words would highlight that Passenger Focus was dedicated to improving the outcome for passengers. The Chairman requested the Board send suggestions and further comments to AS.

The Chairman suggested indicating broadly how funds would be directed as it was important to answer the questions that would inevitably be asked.

DL questioned the gap in budget figures for 2012-13; AS explained this was partly a result of their understanding of accommodation costs at the time. Additionally, the figures for NPS amounted to only the

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external costs and did not include staffing. Ignoring transition costs, research costs had sunk significantly; this put more emphasis on the need to secure greater match funding.

The Board wanted more emphasis on the transparency agenda in the work plan. AS agreed and stated that this would be part of the agenda for the away day for discussion. The work plan will be updated accordingly after this event.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due
BM205	22/02/12	Work plan 2012-13	Board to send further suggestions and comments to AS for consideration. Work plan to be updated with Board members comments.	Anthony Smith	March 2012

In terms of Budget, Passenger Focus had secured £4.7 million for 2012-13. There were three additional budget bids which had not yet been approved or declined.

The Board provisionally **endorsed** the work plan 2012-13 subject to the amendments discussed being included.

The Chairman **noted** that this meeting was the last in to be held in the 2011-12 business year. The Board thanked AS and staff at Passenger Focus for the hard work and good results that had been achieved in a year that had proved to be very busy and challenging.

The meeting was closed at 1545.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Colin Foxall CBE
Chairman, Passenger Focus

Date

Board current action matrix

As at 08 May 2012

No.	Meeting	Issue	Action	Owner	Due Date	Status
BM187	14/09/11	Timetable consultations	Consider developing best practice toolkit on how to best consult with passengers on timetabling changes	Mike Hewitson	Apr 2012	Considered as part of the work plan 2012-13. Not included but will be reconsidered mid year. Complete. Delete
BM191	14/09/11	TOC complaint stats	Annual account of individual TOCs complaint results to be sent to Managing Directors.	Anthony Smith	May 2012	To be completed at end of the financial year.
BM198	9/11/11	Unplanned disruption	SWT and Network Rail to be invited to future Board meeting to explain progress in implementing John Curley's recommendations.	Anthony Smith	Apr 2012	AS and Guy Dangerfield have met with SWT and NR to discuss this issue. Note circulated on Connect announcements. Complete. Delete.
BM202	09/11/11	Diversity and inclusion Training	Date for Board attendance at Diversity and Inclusion training	Jon Carter	Jun 2012	On draft agenda for June 2012 Members event.
BM203	22/02/12	Passenger group events	Circulate a schedule of events to the Board	David Sidebottom	Mar 2012	Emailed to Board members on 22 March 2012 Complete. Delete.
BM204	22/02/12	Questionnaire on Board activities and effectiveness	Circulate draft to the Chairman for comments before use.	Jon Carter	Mar 2012	Circulated to Chairman and comments received in March 2012. Complete. Delete.
BM205	22/02/12	Work plan 2012-13	Board to send further suggestions and comments to AS for consideration. Work plan to be updated with Board members comments.	Anthony Smith	Mar 2012	Comments have been received and work plan finalised. Complete. Delete.