

Minutes

Statistics Governance Group

Date: Friday 16 September 2016
 Location: Meeting Room 2, Fleetbank House, London, EC4Y 8JX
 Time: 13:00 – 16:00

Present

Stephen Locke	SL	Chair
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board Member
Bob Linnard	BL	Board Member
Theo de Pencier	TP	Board Member
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Insight
Robert Pain	RP	Senior Insight Adviser
Brigitta Horup	BH	Senior Insight Adviser
Michelle Calvert	MCa	Business Executive Officer
Manuela Widmer	MW	Business Services Officer
<u>Apologies:</u>		
Jeff Halliwell	JH	Transport Focus Chair
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services

1.0 Welcome and apologies

SL welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Jeff Halliwell, Anthony Smith and Jon Carter. Michelle Calvert attended the meeting on behalf of Jon Carter.

2.0 Minutes

The group discussed some minor changes to the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16 June 2016. Changes were made and approved.

3.0 Action Matrix

Action Items were discussed and updated:

SGG 1314-061: ongoing status. Update will be provided at the next SGG meeting. MCa will talk to Kate O'Reilly (KOR) by the end of this quarter regarding ORR. JC to update if Audit has been scheduled.

SGG 1516-097: it is a slow process and there will be an update at the next SGG meeting.

SGG 1617-106: to be added to the action matrix

4.0 NRPS update

Invitation to tender:

DG gave a short update on the paper and advised that the agency briefing sessions had gone well. Several agencies had indicated they would be bidding, including some agencies that might be regarded as 'new' to this type of work. Indeed, a reasonable number of bids had been received. After assessment and selection a proposal will be submitted to the next Board meeting.

IW advised that Margaret Shaw from the Department for Transport (DfT) Statistics and Research team had requested sight of the bids. The Committee endorsed IW's recommendation that this should be permitted. However, it needed to be made clear that, while DfT advice is welcome, Transport Focus was the procurement party for OJEU purposes and must ultimately be responsible for the assessment of bids.

NRPS modernisation:

The stakeholder forum in July 2016 went very well with 30-40 people attending. But DfT have so far been unable to supply any of the NRTS analysis (or even an extract from the NRTS database) that would help with updating the weightings, due to other work. This data is however expected shortly.

Autumn wave:

This has taken longer than expected but both the weightings and the building blocks have now been finalised for the vast majority of TOCs. We are confident that agreement with the few remaining TOCs will be reached during October.

Pre-release:

Following discussions with ONS, the Insight team recommended that the 24 hour pre-release list for the autumn 2016 wave and beyond be limited to two people per TOC / external organisation; the three week pre-release arrangement allowing TOCs access to their own data should, however, allow TOCs to list *more* than two people for purposes of analysis, data verification and operational planning. All pre-release arrangements should be the subject of signed undertakings. The Group **agreed**, noting that, in particular, the three week pre-release arrangement benefits both parties. It is of particular value to Transport Focus because it enhances our reputation as being helpful, and helps speed up the publication process.

East Anglia

The East Anglia (EA) franchise will be renewed from October 2016 and, with the DfT, Transport Focus has developed a new passenger experience measurement. Transport Focus has been asked to expand the current NRPS coverage for EA services to have continuous, year-round tracking. DfT have also asked us to establish a mystery shopping programme, the pros and cons of which had been discussed in some detail by Management Team prior to project approval.

It was also noted by the Group that the use of section no.4 in the project plan “Implication – Financial, Risk, Legal, Staffing” should have been completed more thoroughly; certainly reputational risk should always be explicitly considered.

5.0 South Eastern Railway

A few days before publication of the Spring 2016 NRPS in late June, Southeastern (SER) informed us that the journey purpose and weekend/weekday weightings that we had been applying for several years were incorrect. They acknowledged that the oversight was theirs. Transport Focus has applied the revised weights and re-run analysis for all the key factors for Southeastern, London & South East sector and nationally. When comparing the revised satisfaction scores with the previously published results for 2010 to 2016, none of the differences are statistically significant but there are some minor changes to published results (for the TOC, and also for the Sector and nationally).

The Insight team recommended, and the Group **agreed**, that as soon as practicable, Transport Focus publish these revised results for Southeastern, for London & South East sector, and nationally, and that we follow the advice given by ONS on how to handle retrospective changes to datasets. The cost for doing all this extra work is being borne by Southeastern. There will also be a note on our Open Data site explaining that we corrected the report and we have removed the incorrect one. It was **agreed** that there is currently no need to create a specific policy for handling any future retrospective changes to weighting information as the ONS guidance, applied sensibly to Transport Focus datasets, should suffice.

The Group agreed also that a formal request should be made to SER for a written acknowledgement that the error was theirs and for details of how they plan to avoid any similar problems in future.

SGG 1617-107	16/09/16	SER	Procure necessary and adequate written response	IW	Dec 16
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6.0 BPS update

Robert Pain attended the meeting and provided an update. Sign-ups to this autumn’s Bus Passenger Survey were nearly complete (with Scotland to be finalised). The paper provided an update on the latest position with regard to the participating areas, target response numbers, and finances.

He reported that the provisional sample size in Scotland had increased and a more rural (Highlands, Dumfries & Galloway) coverage had been obtained. RP was pleased to report that the Scottish mainland is well covered. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for Wales where there was no participation at all. Unfortunately, it had proved difficult to talk directly to the decision-makers in Wales and sometimes in parts of England we had found this year that there was no budget available.

The overall target of 50,000 responses was unlikely to be reached but there was every prospect that the results would surpass last years, given the inclusion of Scotland and significant support from Stagecoach, First and Go Ahead. Very helpfully, Stagecoach had explicitly requested data for those areas where local authorities hadn't been able to support the survey this year.

Lothian Buses unfortunately did not return to the survey this year (they dropped out last year, their argument being that they do not need a survey every year), with a change in senior management possibly the reason behind this.

There will be a methodological review after this year's survey.

The Group **noted** the update, and commended staff on the progress that had been made, both against last year and compared with the previous rather pessimistic assessment for this year. Congratulations were especially due for the great achievement in Scotland.

7.0 TPS update

This autumn's Tram Passenger Survey had now been re-tendered and sign-ups from the networks were now complete. The paper provided an update on the latest position with regards to the participating networks, target response numbers, finances and methodology.

RP reported that participant funding had been achieved from the same four networks as in 2015. Our reduced budget allocation for 2016/17 meant that we needed Nottingham NET and Sheffield Supertram to provide part funding this year (for the first time) in order to include their networks. Sheffield Supertram (SYPT) have not been able to provide funding, however Nottingham has been confirmed.

The total planned responses figure was 4,800, 250 less than last year. But this was a reasonable achievement given the halving of Sheffield's numbers.

The group discussed whether tram operators were really aware of the impact the survey could have - and noted that it was generally easier to get the participation of tram passengers than bus passengers. RP noted that for some reason Manchester was an exception to this rule. There was still an aspiration to bring Tyne and Wear metro, Croydon tramlink and the Dublin Luas system into the TPS fold, though there were no immediate prospects of progress here.

The Group concluded that, in general, the situation was very positive and thanked RP and colleagues for their work.

8.0 New SRUS – update

BH joined the meeting to give an update on SRUS and explained the current successes of, and improvements yet to be made to, the survey. Scripting, questionnaire design and sampling were discussed. The group discussed various options for sampling, whether weighting should be based on distance travelled or number of journeys and whether, as a starting hypothesis, improvements desired from HGV and private drivers were likely to be the same.

The criteria we are using to judge the success of the SRUS were discussed. BH assured that, as long as the user testing goes to plan, we would begin the pilot SRUS late October to early November, with the main survey due to begin October 2017. The Group agreed with IW that we should be clear what we want from the survey, and beware of over-complicating it.

BH agreed to I circulate the link to the new SRUS to the SGG group for them to experience the survey themselves.

SGG 1617-108	16/09/16	SRUS	Send link to group (BH)	IW	Nov 16
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Thanks were expressed to BH for her had work. The update was **noted**.

9.0 Update on preferred supplier list (PSL)

IW reported on the progress of refreshing the PSL, through which process 22 agencies had submitted expressions of interest. Two lots had been established (Quant and Qual) and sifting had been completed. Currently IW and his team were working through the key financial and legal issues with the help of our resources team so that everything could be in place by October 2016.

The Group confirmed it was **content** with the process of the PSL refresh and would be **content to endorse** the outcome based upon it.

10.0 Any other business

IW confirmed the on-line panel would soft launch in early October

There were three administrative requests:

- papers should have a “created date” inserted to gauge if there had been any changes since the paper was created.

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- on paper 4.0 – NRPS update: Section 4: should have a bullet point about implications in regards to the equality screen.
- on paper 7.0 – TPS update: equality screen should be captured.

The Chair congratulated the contributors for their good work and thanked everyone.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 14:51. The next meeting is planned for **Thursday 15 December 2016** at Fleetbank House, London.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Stephen Locke
Chair

Date:
