

Statistics Governance Group

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Date: Thursday 15 December 2016
Location: LG6, Fleetbank House, London, EC4Y 8JX
Time: 13:00 – 15:00

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
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Michelle Calvert	MC	Business Services Executive
<u>Apologies:</u>		
Jeff Halliwell	JH	Transport Focus Chair
David Greeno	DG	Senior Insight Advisor
Robert Pain	RP	Senior Insight Advisor
Brigitta Horup	BH	Senior Insight Advisor
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services

1.0 Welcome and apologies

SL welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies which are mainly due to the temporary closure of the office for refurbishment and therefore the unavailability of staff.

2.0 Minutes

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

3.0 Action Matrix

Action Items were discussed and some minor changes proposed. The matrix will be updated.

4.0 NRPS update

Ian and David met with Chime, our chosen contractors for the NRPS, on the 30th November to start planning the Spring 2017 wave. It was a useful meeting and clearly Chime had already

done significant preliminary planning. In terms of the contract with the new agency, there had been some discussion between BDRC and Chime regarding TUPE arrangements between the two agencies (with up to eight members of staff potentially transferring across). This had taken longer to sort out than foreseen, but agreement was expected soon which will enable the contract with Chime to be signed.

Subject to funding being available the plan was to have fieldworkers in high visibility jackets, and for workers to obtain age and gender counts during their shifts during the spring 2017 wave.

It was agreed by the group that high visibility jackets would probably be worthwhile – they would help the interviewers stand out and give a sense of authority. The costs were discussed as well as the design (they would have the Transport Focus and the agency logo visible). Network Rail were happy with them being worn, however some TOCs were concerned they would be mistaken for a member of their staff. It was agreed that the field workers would be able to handle this issue. In IW's view, the only remaining concern would be that the added advertisement could attract people with further issues eg queries and complaints about services – this could be remedied by making sure the field workers know where to divert inquiries.

The use of age and gender factors in selecting respondents was discussed, IW considered this important because of the effect and impact these factors have on the results. Pre-selection of respondents would help to improve the representativeness of the sample and so reduce dependence on weightings of the results.. The Group agreed on the usefulness of counting age and gender; it would also be helpful to to count the people who decline..

The Group also discussed the impact assessments at the end of the paper. Some concern was expressed about the apparent lack of thought given to the entries in individual boxes. In some cases it was obvious there would be a significant impact from this piece of work. These impacts needed to be properly recorded.

The Group then turned to the content of the questionnaire. The DfT have requested that Transport Focus include two additional short Wi-Fi questions in the Spring 2017 questionnaire about strength and consistency of signal when using Wi-Fi whilst on the train. These questions might be used as a target within franchise agreements. The issue was highly topical and so there was a value in what transport users think about it. The Insight team recommended that this request was accepted and SGG members were asked to approve it. The Group agreed that these questions should be included if it was possible to do so without leaving something else out. Methodologically, the issue was quite tricky, but the general view of the Group was that the questions were worth testing as a base for future development. At a very minimum they would provide useful trend and comparison data.

. The aim, format and potential benefits of the questions were discussed in some detail. PM used Virgin trains as an example in relation to their use of the Beam app and their signal strength for Wi-Fi. Variation in signal strength and speed arose for a whole host of reasons, not all of which were within the company's control.

The Group concluded that wifi information is something we need to capture but the format of the questions needs to be explored further. One possibility was to use the panel to explore the issues. If there was space within the next wave survey format to include the questions, they could be run on a trial basis. But it would probably take more than one iteration to capture genuinely useful information.

IW added that following the Transport Select Committee meeting there was an obvious interest that the NRPS be more frequent. Ball park costs were being discussed and further exploration was needed.

SGG1617-109	15/12/2016	NRPS update	Explore costings of having the NRPS more frequent	IW	Jan 17
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5.0 South Eastern Railway

At the last meeting of the SGG it was agreed that Transport Focus would publish revised results for Southeastern, for the London & South East sector, and nationally, and that we should follow the advice given by ONS on how we do this.

It was originally planned that the revised reports would be published by early November, but it had not yet been possible to publish as Southeastern had not complied with a request from the Transport Focus Board and SGG to supply a letter accepting clear internal responsibility for the need for the results to be revised. This was despite Transport Focus staff chasing them up on several occasions. The SGG was concerned that, without such a document, responsibility for the revisions might be laid at the door of BDRC-Continental and/or Transport Focus.

The set of words so far received from Southeastern was discussed, and was agreed to be inadequate. Further discussions with the Department were also continuing. BL recommended that Transport Focus prepare a draft account that it would consider acceptable, setting out how the situation came about and developed. We should then send the draft to SER and notify them of our intention to publish. This would allow Transport Focus to take control of the situation. The Group agreed on this course of action.

The need for recognition of reputational risk in this paper was discussed.

SGG1617-110	15/12/2016	South Eastern Railway	Draft a response letter to SE and explore possible escalation options	IW	Jan 17
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6.0 Scotrail parallel run

A request was received from Scotrail for a dual-measurement approach to NRPS in Scotland, using old and new methodologies in parallel. The Insight team recommended that the approach was used on Scotrail in Spring 2017 and Autumn 2017 at least (possibly also for the two waves in 2018). SGG members were asked to approve the request from Scotrail for a dual-measurement approach to NRPS in Scotland in spring 2017. Any additional costs; for example for statistical support, would be paid for by the TOC.

Whilst there are various details to discuss further with them and with Chime, the idea of a dual-run did not, in the view of Transport Focus staff, contravene any NRPS terms and conditions. IW noted that Scotrail had had a brief discussion with Chime and they think the fieldwork schedule could support the additional work needed. Transport Focus would of course expect Chime to do all the fieldwork and there would be a net cost benefit for Scotrail in them doing so. The project may be very useful for Transport Focus in offering a direct comparison between the new and old methodologies.

The Group agreed with the potential usefulness of the project, but noted that this would also have a reputational risk, if the results significantly diverged. There was also a risk that other TOCs may insist on having a dual-run survey themselves. It was agreed that it would be difficult to say no to this proposal, though we do need to know more about the Comms implications and possible publication outcomes. On this basis the group agreed that Transport Focus agree to the request and continue as planned. This proposal will be discussed with the NRPS Technical Group on the 22nd December, who we expect will be generally supportive.

The Group noted further that the impact assessment had once again not been fully completed.

7.0 New SRUS - update

The Group considered the latest position regarding the Strategic Road User Survey (SRUS). The most significant development on the SRUS pilot since the last SGG meeting was the completion of a second round of extensive user testing designed to inform a decision about which of three questionnaire versions to take forward to the pilot in January 2017. The three versions of the questionnaire tested include the 'one road' approach, 'motorways and major 'A' roads' and the 'entire journey'.

Transport Focus's strong preference in the light of this testing was the 'one road' version which it was proposed should be taken forward to pilot in January. However the Department saw attractions in the 'entire journey' model, even though the data received is more generalised. There is a financial implication but this would probably be covered by the department and so it had been decided that this would go ahead in parallel.

Further to the overarching decision on questionnaire approach, the user testing highlighted minor refinements that could still be made before the January pilot. These included reviewing the questionnaire section on delays and roadworks - respondents found these questions confusing in that they saw delays and roadworks as essentially the same thing;

and simplifying the interactive map for the online approach to cater for less IT literate respondents

IW then discussed the survey issues in more detail.

IW explained to the group that the DVLA's Board has reduced our sample size from 65k to 50k. This is still a usable amount but has implications on the amount of data we will gather. The Group discussed the possible reasons for this decrease. They noted further that, if Transport Focus did find as a result of the pilots that 50k wasn't enough to gather sufficient information, we could go back to the DVLA for further consideration.

The Group discussed the possibility of making a formal complaint about DVLA's handling of this issue as the effect may be quite substantial. A successful pilot and a high response rate may dissipate the issue and support our application of a larger sample size. But there were also some significant general concerns about what apparently unilateral decisions of this kind implied for future relationships. AS agreed to speak to and/or write to the DVLA CEO.

The Group then turned to the report from Future Thinking on "SRUS pilot testing: Results from Usability and Cognitive Testing". The Group noted a number of significant problems identified, particularly in relation to the development of the mapping tool. At this time did not provide sufficient assurance that this tool was useable ... From the analysis in the report, it seemed obvious that more development was needed for the mapping tool, IW explained that this was a developing programme and so issues were always going to be raised on first use. Amendments to the mapping tool were already in hand IW assured the Group that the outstanding issues would be resolved before the final date of the maps launch. Once we start the pilot in January, we are hoping to have a working map with no need for further changes post-production.

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The Group was still not fully reassured on these concerns. They discussed whether to support the current time scale or recommend that the launch is postponed. The key issue was the level of confidence in the pilot results.. Could another 2 months give the team time to create a better mapping tool? SL added that the issue was purely a practical, not a methodological, one and it may be beneficial simply to explore the issue in more detail.

The key issue for the Group boiled down to whether the "Map improvement tips" page 28 of the Forward Thinking document would be fully completed before the pilot went ahead in January. IW assured that these issues were being resolved. On the basis of this assurance, the Group considered that the risk of not proceeding outweighed the risk of going ahead, and it therefore gave its support to continuing with the present timetable. However it concluded that further scrutiny would be needed, both during the execution of the pilot and in assessing its results.

The process for appraising the results of the pilot was discussed. AS wondered whether, given the importance of the mapping element, discussing this pilot with Google would be worthwhile. This would allow building their feedback into the evaluation. Using the SGG to

review and giving a detailed appraisal of the pilot was agreed upon. A paper regarding how the results will be analysed and how the results would be used would be beneficial to circulate to the group. Having a 'go to' person within SGG specifically for these issues developing over the next few weeks was deemed useful and so IW will keep in touch with any important updates.

The Group commented finally on the briefing paper submitted. PM noted that the briefing document was evidently created by a member of staff who was deeply immersed into the project. This meant that some information is assumed and some doesn't make sense to those less close to the project. The Group agreed on the need to ensure that briefings were prepared with the non-exec nature of the SGG's membership in mind.

SGG1617-111	16/12/2016	New SRUS - update	Create and circulate report on analysis of pilot review results	IW	Jan 17
SGG1617-112	16/12/2016	New SRUS - update	AS to contact DVLA CEO	AS	Jan 17

8.0 BPS update

IW explained that more analysis had been done since the paper was created. At the time of writing, fieldwork was still in progress, having been extended by one week from the original plan. This was necessitated by the lower than expected response levels experienced in many areas. The reduced response rate was found to be down to lesser experienced interviewers. With the extra fieldwork we are hoping to hit 45k interviews by the end of the wave. The Group noted that the decline in responses may be part of a more general trend affecting survey research. Response levels represented a significant long term risk in relation to the BPS.

9.0 TPS update

IW updated the group orally. The possible effect of the Croydon tram crash on the survey was raised – the crash happened during the fieldwork period, but it was not considered likely to have affected responses. Otherwise a very positive update.

10.0 Update on Online Panel

A number of current uses of the Online Panel were noted by the Group. The SEQ / Southern surveys are feeding into Chris Gibb's Project Board and also into the SEQ Taskforce, which has reconvened. Transport Focus ran a survey paid for by Northern which has been far more successful than expected. A project funded by ITSO has now gone ahead and a small survey for Merseyrail. There has been very positive feedback from the industry regarding the panel and future possible uses of the panel was discussed.

SL raised the need for caution in relation to the management of panel members, their allegiances, the way in which they advertise their involvement and the quality of the information we receive from them that is coloured by their personal views.

MC noted that the approvals of these on-line panel related projects required a very quick turnaround. This issue has been discussed at both BIG and with the Franchise Task Force. Looking forward, the process may be in need of delegated authorities to ensure that the projects are being significantly queried (especially in the case of reputation risk) and to assure that approvals are processed in a timely manner.

11.0 Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 15:00. The next meeting is planned for **Wednesday 15 March 2016** at Fleetbank House, London.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Stephen Locke
Chair

Date:
