

Minutes



Transport Focus Board	
Date:	16 November 2016
Location	National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

Attended

Board members:

Jeff Halliwell	JH	Chair
Marian Lauder MBE	ML	Board member
Theo de Pencier	TP	Board member
Isabel Liu	IL	Board member
Paul Rowen	PR	Board member
Dr Stuart Burgess CBE	SB	Board member
Diane McCrea MBE	DM	Board member for Wales
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board member for Scotland
Bob Linnard	RL	Board member

Executive in attendance:

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
David Sidebottom	DS	Transport User Director
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Insight
Mike Hewitson	MH	Head of Policy and Issues
Guy Dangerfield	GD	Head of Transport Strategy
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Linda McCord	LM	Passenger Manager
Hazel Phillips	HP	Head of Public Affairs
Michelle Calvert	MCa	Business Services Executive

Guest Speakers:

Pete Bond	PB	Transport for the West Midlands
Ali Bell	AB	National Express
Melanie Clarke	MC	Highways England

Apologies:

Stephen Locke	SL	Board member for London
---------------	----	-------------------------

Members of the public:

Approximately ten members of the public attended the meeting

Part A: Preliminary

1.0 Chairman's opening remarks; apologies

JH welcomed everyone to the public board meeting, especially those members of the public in attendance; he explained an opportunity to ask questions would be provided.

JH offered the boards deepest sympathies to all of those affected by the Croydon tram crash the previous week and commended the emergency services for their work at the scene.

Apologies had been received from Stephen Locke who was on holiday.

JH advised that Pete Bond, Transport for the West Midlands, Ali Bell, National Express, and Melanie Clarke, Highways England, would be presenting at today's meeting.

2.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board approved the minutes and authorised the Chair to sign them, subject to three minor changes.

3.0 Board action matrix

JH requested an update on actions past their due date on subsequent action matrices.

Item 1617-259 (BPS): this is with DS who has started discussions with stakeholders. The next step is a further series of meetings in January.

Item 1617-260 (SRUS): further work was required before the link could be circulated.

Item 167-261 (Stakeholder satisfaction survey): the budget has been agreed and development is under way

Item 1617-262 (further points re project framework): JC's paper to the last members meeting addressed these; BIG will now be assuming a general oversight role.

4.0 Chairman's report

JH noted that meetings had now taken place with all the relevant ministers and briefing notes had been circulated.

1617-263	Nov 16	Action matrices	Provide commentary wherever possible	JC	Mar 17
----------	--------	-----------------	--------------------------------------	----	--------

Part B: Public Affairs

1.0 West Midlands Bus Alliance

The session was introduced by Linda McCord, Chair.

PB observed that over recent years a great deal of enthusiasm for bus services had been developed. Survey results had originally been some of the worst in the country, but partnership working had seen a great rise in satisfaction levels. In this respect the bus alliance has been extremely effective.

A video was shown featuring Linda McCord and others. It discussed the main aims of the bus alliance in particular keeping customer satisfaction levels at around 85%. The West Midlands Combined Authority is made up of 7 metropolitan areas and from May 2017 will have an elected Mayor for the first time. Devolution of rail services in the West Midlands will see a real shift in how travel is managed for the benefit of the public. HS2 will also be a key driver of change.

One of the challenges was the legacy of the 1985 Transport Act which had created a disconnection between roads management and operators. This led to a political belief that bus operators were there only to make money; as a result punctuality and reliability had suffered. The Bus Alliance deals with this disconnect by bringing together the operators, the local authorities, and the police under an independent Chair.

There are many challenges for the alliance but at a senior level there is good buy-in across a range of issues:

- responding to the needs of the passenger
- air quality
- suspension of bus lanes
- keeping up with growth

AB reported that National Express had won the bus operator of the year award, with a feeling that the West Midlands was working in a more mature partnership than might be the case elsewhere. The model is clearly working and should be considered in other regions; passengers don't care about how things are done or by whom, they just want a service they can rely on.

With respect to the buses bill and devolution, the Alliance is already delivering most of what is being proposed. Having the police on board, for example, has already made an impact by reducing the levels of anti-social behaviour. Buses with audio-visual and Wi-Fi capability is also increasing customer satisfaction and 100 of these buses have been introduced this year, on top of the 65 last year. This investment is tailored toward the main commuter routes and councils have worked with NEx to put in measures to ease congestion.

The board considered patronage on key routes, impact on smaller operators and non-users. The alliance started in September 2015 and since then patronage had increased and was expected to continue to increase, as opposed to the UK generally. Where new routes had been introduced, patronage was good. Smaller operators are represented on the Alliance board. Insofar as non-bus users were concerned, two pieces of work were planned; young users and non-users.

The mayoral election was on the horizon and the board wondered what impact a particular mayor might have on the provision of bus services. Beverly Neilson, one of the four candidates, was present and responded. She confirmed that congestion, air quality, innovation in technology and smart ticketing were likely to be a priority for all candidates. Members of the Alliance present considered they would be able to work well with whoever was elected.

2.0 Roads – Highways England

Melanie Clarke, Operations Customer Service Director for HE thanked the board for the opportunity to discuss road user issues with them. She considered that in a very short space of time HE and Transport Focus had established a sound working relationship.

The Highways Agency generally failed to connect with road users; everything was considered from an infrastructure perspective and the 'end-user' was invariably overlooked. Highways England has recognised that a customer strategy is both absolutely necessary and a huge challenge. Customer satisfaction will be key and the new SRUS will help HE to understand its different customer groups, deliver the right product to them and make a difference to their journeys.

MC also covered other key issues now being dealt with by HE: that different departments actually talk to each other; travel information and how it is communicated; restructuring to deliver a customer focus; new signs on the network; published journey times, and much more. HE was in the process of big change and knew it must deliver increased customer satisfaction.

JH thanked Melanie for her candid assessment of the change needed at HE; he wondered if the specific recommendations that Transport Focus had made were helpful? It appeared they are and the Customer Directors are currently discussing them.

On journey times and diversions, MC considered HE needs to build better relationships with urban traffic control to work on the end to end journey. Often where traffic is diverted alternative methods of transport might be just as important, recognising that not all diversionary routes are suitable and can have a severe impact on non-SRN road users.

1617-264	Nov 16	Recommendations to HE	Create and maintain log	GD	Mar 17
----------	--------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----	--------

Agenda Item: Part C: Workplan Report

1.0 Workplan 2016-2017

The board **endorsed** the general direction of the draft workplan as work in progress and made the following observations:

- The volume of insight projects is higher than ever; we must make sure we don't take on work beyond our capacity to deliver
- The complaints caseload is continuing to rise, and additional resources should be targeted to the Contact Team if possible
- The reporting of the workplan needs to be made more efficient; the report needs a review in the light of the new workplan.
- Key objectives need 'smartening up'
- KPI's for all teams who have them need reviewing to ensure they are fit for purpose. There is scope to think about digitalisation and making things faster and saving paper, which would help with KPIs. However, we can't assume everyone has the suitable hardware to download the papers. JC reconfirmed that he could not operate two systems – he would be very pleased to move over to digital only copies but the entire board would have to agree to do so.

2.0 Finance Report

The board **noted** the Finance report for the half year to September 2016. There were no issues arising from this report.

1617-265	Nov 16	Workplan report	Consider how to simplify for 2017-2018	AS	Mar 17
----------	--------	-----------------	--	----	--------

Agenda Item: Park D: Corporate Affairs

1.0 To receive and endorse draft V3 minutes of meetings

1.1 Passenger Contact Group: 21 July 2016

(no minutes yet available)

ML reported that the complaint case load is increasing every week. We are funded to deal with 2,500 appeals but this year it is more likely to be 5,000. This increase is partly due to the revised ORR guidance.

Certain train operators own complaint handling problems were however contributing to the burden. Despite a degree of managing expectations of our customers so that they are aware we may not respond within the specified time, the situation is not sustainable.

DS confirmed that in the last few days additional staff had been appointed and this would help in the short term. We are also working with the operators to manage down the number of appeals we receive, and if this doesn't make any noticeable difference we may have to formally refer the matter to ORR. But this is very much a last resort. On the other hand there is evidence that certain operators are taking a less flexible approach to certain issues, in particular fares, and this has also partly driven the increase in volumes.

The board **agreed** to keep the issue under review and asked DS to report again at the next meeting.

1.2 Statistics Governance Group: 16 September 2016

The board **noted** the minutes of the SGG. There were no issues arising from the minutes.

1.3 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: 21 October 2016

ML presented the minutes of the ARAC meeting which the board **noted**. The only other issues to note were, firstly, that on internal audit, the change management audit had been returned with a 'substantial' grading, which was good news; secondly we have agreed the NAO audit fee of £21,000, the same as the previous year.

2.0 For approval by the Board

2.1 Updated governance arrangements

JC presented the revised governance arrangements to take immediate effect. With two minor amendments...

- PM is not to be regarded as a permanent member of the franchising task force
- Include the principles for additional work and a flow chart in a more widely distributed version of the new arrangements

...the board **approved** the new arrangements

The board also **endorsed** the Chair's nomination of Dr Stuart Burgess to the Audit, Risk Assurance and Remuneration Committee.

2.2 Risk Management Strategy

The board **approved** the updated risk management strategy as presented by JC subject to some clarity being provided around risks for category D and E projects.

2.3 Membership Code – final approval

The board **approved** and **agreed** to promulgate the updated membership Code. JC offered thanks for the considerable assistance from board members.

2.4 ARAC Risk Report to Board

The board welcomed and noted the half year risk report presented by ML on behalf of ARAC.

3.0 For noting by the Board: *items previously approved out of meeting*

3.1 BRD1617-07 – E78 – Nexus rolling stock research

Presented by Ian Wright

Noted

3.2 BRD1617-08 – R76 – Waterloo improvement tracking project

Presented by Guy Dangerfield

Noted

3.3 CRD1617-09 -R83 – Recruitment of 60+ NRPS recontacts to panel for ITSO about Bus passes

Minutes

Presented by Ian Wright

Noted

3.4 BRD1617-10 – B89 – Motorway Services Users survey

Presented by Guy Dangerfield

Noted

1617-266	Nov 16	Advice team resourcing	Urgent action required for short term	AS	Dec 16
----------	--------	------------------------	---------------------------------------	----	--------

4.0 Any other business

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1650 hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:



Jeff Halliwell
Chair, Transport Focus

16/08/2017

Date