Minutes

transportfocus

Statistics Governance Group

Nov 17 BM D 01.2

Date:	12 September 2017
Location:	Meeting Room 2, Fleetbank House, London, EC4Y 8JX
Time:	14:00 – 15:30

Present

Stephen Locke	SL	Chair
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board Member
Bob Linnard	RL	Board Member
Theo de Pencier	TP	Board Member
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Insight
David Greeno	DG	Senior Insight Advisor
Robert Pain	RP	Senior Insight Advisor
Murray Leader	ML	Senior Insight Advisor
Toby Cotton	TC	Senior Insight Advisor
Elizabeth Ganak	EG	Business services officer

DRAFT v3

1.0 Welcome and apologies

SL welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies given from Brigitta Horup and Rosie Giles.

2.0 Minutes

The Group discussed the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13 June 2017; no substantive changes were made but IW pointed out a discrepancy on page 2.

3.0 Action Matrix

PM felt that item 1718-119 on the matrix, regarding Rail Passenger Trust and Priorities, was not fully addressed at the Members' Event earlier that day. IW could not provide any additional information, however the group are happy with the data they have and are confident in the methodology used. AS suggested that this report should be separate from the 2014 report since they were not conducted in the same way.

Statistics Governance Group

SGG 1718-120	12/09/17	Trust Update	Provide analysis on Trust Data	**IW**	**Dec 17**

National Rail Passenger Survey

4.0 Autumn 2017 update

DG confirmed that field work for the Spring Wave, having started in January, was completed at the end of April. He then discussed the new methodology that was used, and the findings which were published in July.

The franchising arm of DfT took it upon themselves to take responsibility for any implications of the changes, and at the time of this meeting, there was no indication on what impact was likely. SL suggested getting something in writing from the Department for Transport, which could tell us what they would like Transport Focus to do; the group feels that Transport Focus has thus far offered as much as we can.

SL asked about a recent NRPS Technical Group meeting which went smoothly and that group was pleasantly surprised that there were few apparent changes as a result of the new NRPS methodology. The results also generally matched well with comparable PPM data. The results for Northern have changed very slightly (average of about 0.25%) due to a blank cell in the weighting for one building block, which shouldn't have been blank. The effect of this is that about a dozen factors have changed by 1% in the main report, but no changes were significant. This will be discussed with Northern and the DfT. He then pointed out that this was a good learning curve for both DfT and TF.

The Autumn Wave started on the 1st of September, and the hand out rate is higher (67 per shift) already than the Spring pilot wave (65 per shift).14% have been returned online, as of this meeting, and around 2,000 handed back from the field work.

IW mentioned that Northern has been running an 'NRPS' like predictor survey with another group, however Transport Focus has been approached to continue this survey and is currently in negotiations. Their current survey will run until the end of September, and the quote is with Northern to start at the end of November, when the current NRPS finishes. RL asked about conflicts of interest, but PM said that since they are publishing the report there shouldn't be a problem. All **agreed**, saying that we need to be clear on who is publishing, whose initials and brands are on the report, and moving away from the NRPS branding (as this is not a national survey).

DRAFT V3

Statistics Governance Group

Strategic Roads User Survey

5.0 New SRUS Update

IW filled in for BH who was not able to make the meeting. At the previous SGG meeting, the main topic of discussion was the online approach to SRUS through DVLA. At the time we were in the process of requesting a further phase of online piloting through DVLA. The aim of this request was to incorporate technical improvements into the survey that we believed would boost the overall response rate of the initial pilot from 1.6%. This response rate is not viable for main stage SRUS if it were to be online, although it is likely to be fixable as the evidence suggests it was due to the survey getting trapped in spam. The improvements incorporated into our request for a second pilot included guidelines for avoiding spam, enhancing the survey messaging and refining the online platform, particularly for smartphones. But the data sharing panel at DVLA rejected our request for a second pilot, their formal response was as follows:

On 13th June the data sharing triage assessment process rejected this latest request for additional volumes based on the following:-

- *Oliver Morley had already made it clear that a full review of the pilot needs to take place before proceeding.*

- *Based on the last request to increase the volumes from 32,500 to 50k the data sharing panel would be very reluctant to consider an additional increase.*

An appeal to this decision has been made, and as of this meeting no response has been received.

6.0 SRUS Work Plan

IW continued with a verbal update about key aspects of the planned SRUS approach that are currently being examining and were **noted** by the group:

- Bespoke face to face survey seems to be the best option
- Sample size and sampling approach (recommending a 20,000 sample size).
- The questionnaire approach: one road vs whole SRN journey (recommending the one road approach).
- A survey of drivers vs a survey of drivers *and* passengers (recommending a survey of just drivers and possibly a separate survey for passengers).
- The qualifying period for respondents: remain at four weeks or narrow to aid recall (SRUS has already been narrowed from twelve months on NRUSS, we doubt it can be narrowed further due to cost).

DRAFT v3

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- A weighting scheme for main stage SRUS.

AS felt that after three years with DVLA the only thing that Transport Focus has to show is the NRUSS, which doesn't fully demonstrate our abilities.

As soon as the final evaluation is available and a budget has been agreed with the Department for Transport it will be shared with SGG members.

SGG 1718-121	12/09/17	SRUS Work plan	Updated timeline	**IW**	**Oct 17**

Bus passenger survey

7.0 BPS Update

RP began his update by saying the survey (online and paper) started 10th September in England, and will commence in Wales & Scotland on the 18th September. He pointed out that there hasn't been a BPS in Wales since 2010.

RP then confirmed to the group that it was the Insight Team's intention to issue a new contract for BPS next year and with this in mind, a meeting of key stakeholders (in England) had taken place earlier in the year to discuss the future shape and direction for the BPS. Feedback from the session was for no major changes to be made to the survey; the key points, as discussed, are listed below:

- Maintain autumn fieldwork
- Keep the focus on "today's" journey
- Move publication forward ahead of stakeholder briefing meetings though ensure all have sight of report before it is published
- Get everyone round the same table when discussing local results
- Produce actionable data
- Continuity of data is important
- Is there a way to better understand "big ticket issues" such as declining patronage, impacts of congestion etc.
- Simplify and modernise wording of questions
- Include postcode question as core
- Compare bus structures (partnerships/alliances etc.) and not just geography
- Transport Focus hold industry to account over actions…we are the Watchdog! (in England)
- Transport Focus shouldn't need to fund new areas….if people want it they should be pay

DRAFT V3

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- Independence of Transport Focus is very important to the survey – funding splits should not be seen to undermine this (e.g. if an operator funded 75% of an area)
- Keep 'satisfaction' as the main measure, but focus more on those very satisfied in reporting
- Track and report passengers' door-to-door experience

One other element discussed was the Open Data tool and whether this might be withdrawn or replaced, as part of the retender process. The existing contractor has also indicated that they will no longer provide the update service required. IW pointed out that this is made more complex due the bus industry having helped fund the establishment of the Open Data tool. IW confirmed that this remains a Management Team action for him and David Sidebottom.

Given the lack of desire for major changes to BPS, RP questioned whether it was best to continue the process that has been started of putting BPS out to tender this year, or hold it back for another year. There were concerns mentioned regarding a potential clash of several ITTs for different surveys being issued at the same time, which, it was felt, could lead to bidders submitting rushed proposals that would not be up to our standards. PM asked what projects would be going to tender for next year and IW confirmed it was NRPS, BPS, SRUS and TPS. It was suggested that NRPS, BPS and TPS should ideally not all be placed with the same contractor.

The Group **agreed** to contine with the tender (ITT) this year.

SGG 1718-122	12/09/17	BPS Open Data tool	Explore the option of using a new contractor or withdrawing/replacing	**IW/DS**	**DEC 17**

Tram Passenger Survey

8.0 TPS Update

RP filled in for Rosie Giles who was not able to make the meeting. This year, participant funding has been achieved from the following 6 networks:

- Blackpool Tramway
- Manchester Metrolink
- Midland Metro
- Sheffield Supertram (SYPTE)
- Nottingham NET
- Glasgow Subway (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport)

DRAFT V3

Statistics Governance Group

Our reduced budget allocation for 2017/18 meant that we needed all participating networks to contribute to funding. Sheffield Supertram (SYPTE) was only able to provide partial funding last year, however they have committed to contributing more fully this year. Moreover, they are boosting their sample size to 1000. This is also the first wave that will include Glasgow Subway.

Unfortunately, Edinburgh Tram have decided not to participate this year, citing the following reasons:

- Not wanting to appear to be competing with sister company, Lothian Buses, who are participating in this year's BPS (on a bi-annual basis). The intention is for Edinburgh Tram to participate next year and every alternate year to compliment Lothian Buses
- Finding the survey expensive by comparison to other survey work they undertake
- Finding that the results take a long time to be published, leaving little time to create meaningful action plans before the next survey
- Expecting upcoming decisions over the controversial extension to make maintaining top position in the league table this year a great challenge.

There was a discussion about how to present the results this time around, since they would not be 'like for like' across the networks for the entire survey (the 'All Networks' level). The absence of Edinburgh Tram (a high scoring network) this year could lead to lower overall scores for the 'All Networks' figures, which would need to be explained. RP confirmed that this will be considered in the reporting for this year's survey.

NRUSS

9.0 Tendering NRUSS for 2018-19 and 2019 -20

ML began by explaining that Transport Focus acquired the National Road Users Satisfaction Survey upon commencement of its road's remit in April 2016. Our intended ownership was to be short term as we would develop the Strategic Road User Survey to supersede it within the first year and then have one year of parallel running. This was to calibrate the difference between SRUS and NRUSS so the target for customer satisfaction that Highways England could be migrated to SRUS from NRUSS.

Unfortunately the SRUS schedule is delayed, expected now to go live in March 2018. TF has responsibility to provide a customer satisfaction metric to ORR, so now

DRAFT V3

Statistics Governance Group

has need to maintain NRUSS at least another year for parallel running. Also NRUSS metrics are part of the Road Investment Period 1 target matrix which runs to March 2020; therefore DfT and ORR may decide it is better SRUS based targets start in Road Period 2.

Finally, live running of SRUS may throw up issues which could cause further delays, therefore NRUSS certainly needs to continue for one year and possibly two years.

The current contract ceases in March 2018. The decision is whether to
a) Issue a single tender to the current supplier
b) Open tender for a replacement supplier.

The Insight team view option a) as the best option because:

1. NRUSS is a 'formal' statistic integral to ORR's measurement of Highways England. The target for customer satisfaction is 90% and achievement in 2016-17 was very close at 89.3%. Even a minute agency effect of changing supplier could alter whether Highways England end up above or below target.

2. In assessing parallel running of SRUS with NRUSS, we have trend data on NRUSS. Should 2018-19 NRUSS and SRUS results be unexpectedly higher or lower, we would better know what differences are real, as nothing had changed on NRUSS compared to prior years.

3. The level of spend is above OJEU, but in tendering the most likely winners are the current contractor or those on our PSL. Insight view is a 1 year + 1 year option is not a highly desirable target for agencies given the incumbency; as it is not a long enough period for any bidder to invest in acquiring the project, especially a tracker that is expected to be retired at the end of that period.

4. The current contractor did not take advantage of the prior single tender to raise their price, and since that point the same director has been running the project.

Government procurement guidelines are that an award for the sum expected for NRUSS 2018-19 is over OJEU threshold and would be expected to be procured via open tender. Corporate Services have informed us the exemptions mentioned by them under procurement guidance are as follows:

a) There is extreme urgency (which has occurred for reasons which are unforeseeable and are beyond the control of the contracting organisation)

b) There is only one supplier capable of delivering the goods, works or services due to technical, artistic or copyright reasons

DRAFT V3

c) No organisations have responded to the advertisement [post an open tender].

The group **agreed** that a one-year contract, with the option of a further year, would be best.

Any other business

10.0 Cyclists Pedestrians and Equestrians Research: Measuring satisfaction with the Strategic Road Network

TC began by saying that it is not clear if non-motorised users are included in the metric to judge Highways England's (HE) performance by and that after the feasibility report is complete, there will be two questions: whether to do this nationally or regionally with a rolling program to focus on 'hot spots'? The group thinks it is up to TF to assess out which of these approaches would be more helpful to HE, and how to target the right responders with vested interests, debating the use of consumer panels or user panels. It was agreed that it would be difficult to generate results without a consumer panel.

TC then expressed his concerns, using bikers as an example: more professional users would not notice things that the more casual user might (and vice versa), and how to categorise the different users in a creditable way. He asked if there would be any campaigning on TF's behalf. The group felt it would be best to empower the community leaders to push for changes, providing them with a 'tool kit' (made from the report) that would be generalised, so it could be used in many different areas.

The group **agreed** that this is an important piece of work for TF to do, since it is certainly incidental / tangential to our remit.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1530 hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

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Theo de Pencier
Chair

Date: _____

DRAFT V3