

Subject: London TravelWatch - Review

Report to: Transport Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 3 November 2010

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report updates the Committee on action being taken to implement the recommendations of the report: *Review of London TravelWatch*, as endorsed by the London Assembly on 20 October 2010.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 **That the Committee endorses the outline implementation plan for the review of London TravelWatch;**
- 2.2 **That the Committee authorises the Chair of the Committee to agree appropriate consultation with key stakeholders including London TravelWatch itself; and**
- 2.3 **That the Committee asks officers to report quarterly on progress.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At its plenary meeting on 20 October 2010, the Assembly resolved:
- (a) That the report: Review of London TravelWatch, be agreed;
 - (b) That it be agreed to delegate responsibility to the Transport Committee to oversee the implementation of the proposals in the Review of London TravelWatch taking into account the issues in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.18 of the report;
 - (c) That it be agreed that the Chair of the Assembly writes to the appropriate Secretary of State proposing that the necessary changes in legislation be made to take forward the proposal in paragraph 4.1 of the report; and
 - (d) That it be agreed that the Chair of the Assembly asks the Mayor to instruct relevant officers to identify space within City Hall to enable staff of London TravelWatch to be relocated to realise the savings identified and take forward the proposal in paragraph 4.7 of the report.
- 3.2 The Chair of the Assembly has written to the Secretary of State and the Mayor in accordance with (c) and (d) above. This paper sets out an implementation plan for approval by the Transport Committee to take forward the proposals in the Review of LondonTravelWatch.

- 3.3 Members of the Business Management and Administration Committee raised a number of issues about the detail of the proposals in the Review. These were reported to the Assembly and referred on to this Committee with the Review. These issues need to be considered during the implementation of the report's recommendations, and these are reflected in the implementation plan attached to this report.

4. Issues for Consideration

Outline implementation plan

- 4.1 The proposals contain options according to what, if any, change is made to the legislation that establishes London TravelWatch, its remit and its basis of operation. The possibilities envisaged in the Review report include London TravelWatch ceasing to exist as a separately constituted organisation, London TravelWatch staff being located at City Hall, discussion with Passenger Focus about contracting out responsibility for rail passengers in the capital, and included some proposals for curtailing London TravelWatch's activities that could be implemented more quickly and without amendment of the law.
- 4.2 An outline implementation plan is attached at **Appendix 1**, suggesting the issues that need to be addressed at / through the implementation stage, and showing action taken so far and the next steps proposed.
- 4.3 At the Assembly meeting on 20 October, the Chair of the Transport Committee undertook that there would be consultation with key stakeholders in developing the detail of the implementation plan.
- 4.4 Further, the aim should be to work collaboratively with London TravelWatch throughout the process of implementing the Review report's proposals, beginning with the more immediate actions in Proposals 5 - 8.
- 4.5 In the meantime, and in anticipation of the outcome of the Government's response to the national economic situation that forms the backdrop to the recent Comprehensive Spending Review announcements, the Mayor in July asked the Assembly to exemplify savings in 2011-12 of 10% on the 2009-10 budget. Accordingly, the draft London TravelWatch budget presented to the Transport Committee in September was based on a full 10% reduction in the coming financial year and the service implications of this adjustment were reflected in the draft business plan. This reduces the London TravelWatch budget from £1.603m in 2010/11 to £1.443m in 2011/12.
- 4.6 In addition, as the Committee will be aware, London TravelWatch is undertaking its own review and its report, once available, will need to be considered in conjunction with the provisional budget / business plan to identify any common ground and duplication in estimating the potential savings to be achieved from the Review proposals.

Future of Passenger Focus

- 4.7 The Government has announced its intention to promote a Public Bodies Bill which will abolish or reform a large number of quangos and non-departmental public bodies. In presenting the Government's proposals, the minister (Francis Maude MP) has stated that the cull of public bodies would save money but that the main reason had always been to improve accountability and reduce the large degree of duplication of work by different bodies.
- 4.8 Passenger Focus, with whom the London TravelWatch Review report recommends discussion (as above) as to the possible transfer of functions relating to rail passengers in the capital, is included in

the Government's list as follows:

“Retain and substantially reform. Retain on grounds of performing a function which requires impartiality. Substantially reform to focus on core role of protecting passengers, while reducing cost to taxpayers.”

- 4.9 The Review report's proposals would retain impartiality in the representation of the interests of London's passengers as the Assembly is not responsible for the provision of transport services. The Review report's proposals would enhance accountability for the budget allocated as the Assembly is itself directly elected.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 251 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (amended) provides that the Assembly may issue to the Board of London TravelWatch guidance as to the manner in which they are to exercise their functions, or general directions as to the manner in which they are to exercise their functions.

- 5.2 Paragraph 10 of Schedule 18 of the GLA Act provides that the Assembly in consultation with the Secretary of State may make arrangements for London TravelWatch to be provided with accommodation.

- 5.3 The proposals of the London TravelWatch working group set out in the report: “Review of London TravelWatch” contain recommendations to issue guidance and directions to the Board of London TravelWatch and to provide London TravelWatch with accommodation. In respect of these proposals the Assembly has the power to do what is recommended in the report.

- 5.4 Section 54(1) of the GLA Act provides that the Assembly may arrange for any of its functions to be discharged by a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly and the Assembly has the power to delegate the functions in section 251 and Schedule 18 of the GLA Act (as amended) to the Transport Committee insofar as they are not already delegated under the Transport Committee's existing terms of reference.

- 5.5 Proposals 2 and 3 of the Review report relate to staffing functions and accommodation. The provision of staffing is the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service after consultation with the Mayor by section 72(5)(a) of the GLA Act. The provision of accommodation is the responsibility of the Mayor by section 72(5)(b) of the GLA Act. The Transport Committee in taking these proposals forward must refer these matters to the Head of Paid Service and the Mayor.

- 5.6 Proposal 1 of the Review report is also subject to changes to primary legislation being agreed with central government and parliament and additional legal advice will need to be taken subject to progress on any legislative changes.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications, as best estimates, relating to the proposals are contained within the body of the report of the working group.

- 6.2 Should the proposals be taken forward, approval will be required as per the Authority's decision-making process (with the inherent financial implications of those matters dealt with at the time) in relation to staff, accommodation and back office support.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Implementation Plan

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers:

The report: *Review of London TravelWatch*

Business Management and Administration Committee 23.9.10 Report 7

London Assembly 20.10.10 Report 6

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