

Transport Committee – 2 March 2017**Transcript of Agenda Item 6 – London TravelWatch Performance Monitoring Report**

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Welcome to Stephen Locke, Chair of London TravelWatch, and Janet Cooke, Chief Executive of London TravelWatch, and Mark Roberts, our Executive Director of Secretariat, Greater London Authority (GLA) who helps oversee our relationship with TravelWatch. Thank you for coming along. First of all, we have your performance monitoring report. Obviously, we have read it. Are there any two or three sentences you want to add, just highlighting any key things for us before we do questions?

Stephen Locke (Chair, London TravelWatch): Not particularly, Chair. This is our six-monthly interim report against the business plan, which was previously approved by the Assembly. You will see in there a mixture of clear and gratifying results and things that are longer-term issues where we have to keep plugging away. It was certainly gratifying to hear Mike Brown [MVO, Commissioner of Transport for London] earlier talking about, for example, rail access to Heathrow, which is something we have pushed from very early on, but there are plenty of other long-term challenges on the horizon, which are described and referred to in the report.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, thank you very much. Good morning. First of all, what changes to transport interchanges do you expect TfL to make in light of your recommendations?

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): There is a whole series. The whole point about interchanges is a whole series of things that transport operators and providers can do, ranging from very small things to very large things, cost-wise make a significant difference to the user experience and improve things and also help the operators to run the system more effectively. We are talking with TfL about the things it might do. On an ongoing basis, we talk about small things that it might do progressively at different stations, but also one of the bigger aspirations we have is to look again at, for example, the interchange arrangements at Brixton and around Lewisham, where there are opportunities to improve customer service and also help the system work. It is those kinds of things, Keith, that we are hopeful of, but we have to keep plugging away in the long term.

Stephen Locke (Chair, London TravelWatch): We had very useful input from Mark Wild [Managing Director, London Underground] at the last of our interchange seminars. He was certainly responding very positively to input, for example, from representatives of the sight-impaired community to issues that could make the use of interchanges very much easier. It is important to remember, though, that this is a multidisciplinary, multi-party exercise because it is not just TfL that has interchange responsibilities; they also apply to Network Rail, to the TOCs, local councils and indeed a number of other participants.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): What specific improvements on cycling safety are you proposing in your report?

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): We are not proposing, as such. What we are trying to do is better understand the implication of the statistics and what might be improvements, though they actually improve cycle safety. We are trying to better understand what this means because, as you know very well, it is the sort of infrastructure you deliver, how you manage that, how you maintain it and also the

opportunities there are to improve things just in terms of the left-hand turns and all the rest of it. There are a whole raft of things. We are trying to better understand the statistics behind the cycling injuries and fatalities so that we can have the appropriate discussions with TfL and the boroughs, as necessary.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. I do not know if you have the financial performance table that was supplied to us, which is on page 78 of the agenda, if that is helpful. I have a query under the “income” heading. It says the original budget was £517,650, then it says the revised budget was £518,000, then it says actual spent income to date is £516,000 and then, “Variance against budget (£2,000)”. Can you explain what is happening there?

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): I imagine that is just cash flow. The income from the Greater London Authority we get in tranches every two weeks through the year. Occasionally, there might be a slight hiccup. It does come and it comes regularly and so I imagine that is just what that represents, Keith. In the latest cash flow figures I looked at, all the GLA income was coming in and right up-to-date. It is probably just reflective of the position.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): What sprung to my mind is, “Transport Focus (cost recovery)”. That is £2,000. That is a positive and the other one is a negative or the other way around. I just wondered if there was any correlation between those two figures.

Stephen Locke (Chair, London TravelWatch): It is coincidence.

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): It is coincidence and rounding.

Stephen Locke (Chair, London TravelWatch): “Transport Focus (cost recovery)” is payment by Transport Focus for the staff time that we provide on safety issues because we have one safety officer who is effectively shared between the two organisations.

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): It is a half-day a week that it reimburses us.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): You cannot explain the £2,000 in brackets, then?

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): This is at the half-year. I could get someone to look at the detail of that, but there was nothing there that flagged up as a ...

Mark Roberts (Executive Director of Secretariat, GLA): As Janet said, this is going to be rounding and the timing of the payment because we do have a regular payment which goes to TravelWatch from here. I will go and check whether there is anything. At the end of the year, it comes out of the budget figures. Otherwise, Janet would tell me.

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): Trust me, yes.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): I have one final question and this is also budget-related. You have indicated that you are having an increase in workload. Have you done anything - or are you going to do anything - to mitigate the risks highlighted by you about not having enough staff to deal with that increased workload?

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch): That is particularly on casework. We just constantly review the situation. We have a very small staff team and whenever there is a vacancy or wherever we have a particular pressure point, we do look again at if there are different ways we can do things. With technology in that, we are looking at continuous improvement, which for us means very small things. We just keep regularly looking at that.

We are in the midst of an exercise at the moment - because we have a maternity leave replacement coming up - of seeing different ways that we can push the work into different places. Yes, it is critical for us that we are deploying our staffing resources as best we can to actually deal with the work that is coming in because we do recognise there is unlikely to be an increase in them.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you very much.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Thank you.