

# WANDSWORTH COUNCIL

## MOBILITY FORUM – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015: 2-4pm

### MINUTES

<b>ATTENDEES</b>
Andrew Hunter – Age UK volunteer
Alan MacDonald – CityFleet and Computer Cab
Alex Johnson – London Councils
Barbara Madeloff
Councillor Walsh
Dave Hignett – Network Rail
Derrick Douglas – Adult Social Care Wandsworth
Faryal Velmi – Director of Transport for All (CHAIR)
Jim South
John Parfitt - Wandsworth Access Association
John Slaughter – Wandsworth Council, Mobility Forum Convenor
Lady-Marie Dawson – Wandsworth Access Association
Loretta Ocloo – Wandsworth Council
Norma MacHaye - Palantypist
Manuel Button – Wandsworth Community Transport
Mark Franklin – SWT Station Manager for Clapham Junction Station
Martyn Ellacott – Phoenix Disability
Michael Hanson – Network Rail
Michelle Albury
Peter Fletcher – TfL Senior Communications Manager
Sesal Patel - Wandsworth Access Association
Rohini Bhalla – Transport for London
Tony O'Connor – London Councils
Tom Cox – Wandsworth Older Peoples' Forum
Veronika Krcalova – South West Trains

### **APOLOGIES**

Anne Reyersbach - Transport for London
Councillor Dawson
Councillor Hart
Councillor Speck
David Smith
Fitzroy Beckford
Flora Walker – Transport for London, LT Museum
Ian Beaton
Joyce Mamode - Transport for London
Kerry Lee – TfL Dial a Ride
Matthew Smith
Phillipa Brooks
Rida Nicholson
Richard Tracey, London Assembly
Rosemary Welchman

Sam Russell – London Overground
Sarah Varnham
Sue Pitt

## **1. Access for All project update – Dave Hignett, Network Rail**

Funding has been secured from the Department for Transport to install a lift at Battersea Park Station from the booking hall to platforms 2 and 3, to serve trains towards Clapham Junction. Wandsworth Council's aspiration to upgrade the station and increase its capacity has influenced this decision. The funding is available until March 2019 and Network Rail aims to deliver the project by this date.

There are no proposals to provide lift access to Platforms 4 and 5 for services to Victoria until the station can be upgraded, due to difficulties with the station layout. Discussions are ongoing to secure funding and develop viable proposals for the station upgrade.

A member of Wandsworth Access Association accepted Dave's offer of involvement in the design work for the lift project.

## **2. Signage for step-free access at Clapham Junction Station – Mark Franklin, South West Trains**

There are proposals to install new signage at Clapham Junction. The proposals are being reviewed and finalised over the next week or so: no installation date is yet available.

The Council has asked that the proposal should include directional signage for step-free access from the street, to direct people to the correct station entrance.

Several issues at Clapham Junction were raised. Firstly, the absence of train announcements in the new passenger lounges on the platforms, which makes it difficult for blind people with hearing difficulties to know when their trains are arriving.

Secondly, the absence of customer service personnel at the information point on the footbridge above platform 10, which makes disability assistance difficult. There were claims that some platform staff are unwilling or unable to assist disabled passengers at short notice. The quality of staff training on disability equality issues was questioned, and it was suggested that training should be provided by trainers having relevant disabilities. Mark agreed to provide more information on the training process.

A request was made for seats to be provided on the footbridge to assist the mobility impaired making the long walk from Brighton Yard entrance to Platforms 1 and 2.

**Action – Mark Franklin & Veronika to investigate these matters and report back.**

### **3. Other Rail Issues - Veronika Krcalova, South West Trains**

South West Trains are reviewing disability awareness training with the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), particularly provision of refresher training for existing staff.

Referring to a question about car parking at Clapham Junction, it was confirmed that there is insufficient space available for car parking.

On the issue of poor information to passengers when trains are diverted, it was agreed that this should not happen and that booked travel assistance should be available at the destination as arranged. There were also complaints of delays in providing taxis at Clapham Junction when lifts were out of order.

Any problems should be raised directly with the customer service team.

**Action – South West Trains to present comprehensive details of their disability awareness training at the next meeting.**

Councillor Walsh asked why many rail-replacement buses are not low-floor accessible vehicles for people with disabilities and heavy luggage, as local bus services use these vehicles, which should therefore be available off-peak for train operators to hire.

**Action – Veronika to respond about rail-replacement buses at the next meeting**

These was a query as why there are no tactiles around the help-point on platform 1 at Putney, to help the visually impaired.

**Action – Mark Franklin to check**

### **4. Taxicard - restrictions on use of electric wheelchairs & aspiration for a person travel budget – Alan MacDonald (CityFleet and Computer Cab) & Tony O’Connor (London Councils)**

In response to an action from the last Forum on the size limits for a wheelchair being able to safely use taxis, the door height and width measurements were provided for the two different types of taxi being used:-

Cab type	Waist height width	Height
TX	780mm	1308mm
Vito	985mm	1259mm

It is proposed to develop a database of types of wheelchairs which can be safely carried by taxi, so that ‘Wheelchair passports’ can be issued to allow users and “Cabbies” to know whether or not a particular wheelchair can be accommodated. A similar approach has been developed by Dial-a-Ride. Where there is doubt over the suitability of a wheelchair, London Councils are planning to offer Taxicard holders the opportunity to have their wheelchairs checked at their home using a taxi.

Some electric wheelchairs are too large for taxis, but the majority of these should be capable of accommodation on Dial-a-Ride buses. Alternatively, if users have access to manual wheelchairs, these could be used in taxis instead of the electric ones.

Concern was expressed that that this proposal would effectively mean that some Taxicard users would be excluded from the Taxicard scheme, as the use of manual wheelchairs is not always an appropriate solution. London Councils explained that there is nothing new in this: they are merely reminding users that wheelchairs need to be secured safely in taxis, a requirement dating from 2000. Failure to do this could result in taxi-drivers losing their licence.

Two alternative solutions were suggested: the first would be to allow individuals a personal travel budget of an equivalent value to the Taxicard to spend on whichever form of transport is most appropriate for their needs, instead of being offered only a Taxicard. The second solution would be to redesign taxi vehicles to accommodate all types of wheelchairs: a new taxi vehicle (the Metro Cab) is already under development but it is unlikely to be able to accommodate large electric wheelchairs.

It is unclear whose responsibility it is to provide innovative solutions to this problem. Any ideas to improve the situation would be welcomed and should be sent to London Councils. It is unlikely that a cab can be designed to accommodate all wheelchairs, and therefore private hire vehicles may be part of the solution. For example, Wandsworth Community Transport is using a Fiat Dobbler to carry wheelchairs.

A need for consultation by service providers was raised and a meeting requested with London Councils to move this forward. TfL is undertaking a social needs transport review, and with Comcab's contract ending in 2017, there is a possibility that future contracts will be slightly different, and possibly integrated with other services.

## **5. UberASSIST – new taxi service for disabled passengers** – Faryal Velmi, Transport for All (TfA)

Transport for London (TfL) is consulting on the rules and regulations for private hire vehicles and mini cabs, including a proposal for mandatory disability equality training for all private hire drivers. The consultation ends on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

TfA are proposing to provide disability equality training for drivers under the new scheme: this is being developed by Uber and will be known as “UberAssist”. The new scheme will enable people to book a vehicle in the knowledge that it will have driver trained to assist disabled and older passengers.

## **6. Pan London Mobility Forum update** – Faryal Velmi, Transport for All (TfA)

The Pan-London Forum is run by TfA as an arena for discussion of London wide transport issues affecting the mobility impaired. The forum has representatives from all across London, principally from access local groups.

## **7. Dial-a-Ride update – Peter Fletcher, TfL**

TfL's social needs transport review is currently considering the future of Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, capital call, community transport and the travel mentoring service, whether Capital Call is still required, and whether a joint booking and complaint system would be applicable. The aim is to make it easier to book, use and manage the services, as they serve the same group of people.

## **8. TfL Issues – Peter Fletcher, TfL**

### **Crossrail 1**

With Crossrail due to open in 2019, TfL has been exhibiting the design of the new trains. They will be 200 metres long, about 30% longer than Tube trains, and provide a range of facilities for disabled people, including being completely walk-through like the new District Line trains, and with dedicated wheelchair spaces. They will also have built in audio visual information and large screens to provide advice to passengers. A suggestion was made of having an intercom system at some key points on the trains for those with severe hearing difficulties who cannot hear normal announcements above the background noise on moving trains. Similarly it was suggested that a kit could be made available to allow those with visual and hearing impairments to pick up information on their own devices.

**Action – Peter to report the suggestions to TfL and feedback to the forum.**

### **Bus Consultations**

Two separate consultations are currently taking place for bus routes 436 & 452, and 424 & 485. Route 436 currently connects Lewisham to Vauxhall and on to Paddington: it is proposed to replace the section to Paddington by an extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Park. Route 452 currently terminates at Wandsworth Road station and the plan is to extend the service to Vauxhall.

It is also proposed to alter bus route 424, which currently serves Putney and Fulham, and to extend it over Wandsworth Bridge to Wandsworth Riverside Quarter, with the Putney end of the service replaced by a diversion of route 485 to Putney Heath. The section of the 485 route from Putney to Wandsworth would be withdrawn.

A request was made for a direct bus service connecting Trinity Road to Balham and Southside Shopping Centre. This needs to be put into writing to TfL's network development team.

Concern was expressed about the ramps used on buses on route 355, with reports of wheelchairs tipping backwards on a lip on the ramp. TfL explained that the ramps are due to be upgraded.

**Action – Peter Fletcher is to report back on the delivery timeline for the ramp upgrade on buses.**

Consultation is also taking place on proposals for changing the road layout, urban realm and the spaces in the area of the Wandsworth gyratory system.

There was a complaint about buses standing at the terminating bus stop opposite the Green Man, Putney Heath: this has been going on for about 2 years and it can allegedly take up to 25 minutes on the phone to report this to TfL. Mobility impaired passengers cannot alight as intended when the stop is blocked.

**Action – Peter Fletcher to ask his colleague George to investigate.**

In response to a complaint about route 270 buses not pulling into the kerb at Putney Bridge Station terminus, TfL responded that they are now responsible for bus driver training, and that they aim to incorporate disability equality issues in the training to achieve consistency across the bus network.

## **9. The Council's Passenger Transport Liaison Group – John Slaughter, Wandsworth Council**

The latest issues considered by the PTLG were highlighted in a handout, which should be attached to these minutes.

## **10. Queries to be addressed**

These were picked up separately by correspondence.

## **11. Matters arising from the last meeting on 21 May 2015**

We were reminded that St George's Hospital have still responded to TfA's "Sick of Waiting" report on hospital transport

**Action – John Slaughter to ask St George's Hospital to attend the next Forum**

## **12. Date of next Meeting**

6pm, 9 June 2016