

**Date: 2 March 2017**

**Item: London Underground Station Action Plan**

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**This paper will be considered in public**

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Panel on the delivery of our Action Plan to address issues raised by London TravelWatch's review of ticket office closures.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

**3 Background**

- 3.1 In November 2013, we announced our modernisation plans for the Tube, including the Fit for the Future – Stations (FftFS) programme. The objective was to deliver better customer service at lower cost.
- 3.2 Following extensive consultation with stakeholders, staff and trade unions, the phased transformation of stations began in February 2015. All ticket offices, except a small number that are regulated by the Department for Transport, were closed by December 2015. These closures were accompanied by the introduction of a new station operating model, which came into full effect in April 2016.
- 3.3 The new operating model gets more staff out into areas of our stations where they are more readily available to help customers. Station staff received comprehensive customer service training, have been equipped with new uniforms and given the latest handheld technology, providing access to real-time information to help our customers. We have also improved many station environments, upgraded ticket machines and put in place better customer information.
- 3.4 In his manifesto, the Mayor pledged to review of the customer impact of ticket office closures. London TravelWatch was asked to conduct an independent review of the programme in late 2016.
- 3.5 London TravelWatch's report identified a number of areas where we need to make immediate improvements. These include measures to make staff more visible and available to passengers, additional functionality on ticket machines and changes to make it easier for customers to get assistance.

- 3.6 While not in scope for the London TravelWatch review, staffing levels and distribution also have a part to play in addressing these concerns. As part of efforts to address London TravelWatch's concerns, we have also looked at this area.
- 3.7 An action plan has been developed to address London TravelWatch's recommendations. This paper provides an update to the Panel on key aspects of our progress.

## **4 Staff Visibility and Availability**

- 4.1 We have recently completed work to review our station staffing model. This is part of our commitment to continue making our stations better for our customers and our people. As a result, we have committed to recruit 325 additional roles to our stations. At least 200 of these will be full-time roles and they will include more than 100 supervisor positions. Our current recruitment plan will see all these people in position by the end of the calendar year, with approximately 25 people joining the organisation each period.
- 4.2 Many of these people will be rostered at our smaller "Metro" and "Local" stations. Our mystery-shopping and London TravelWatch's review indicate that these stations have experienced the most challenges with staff visibility since the change in station operating model. Extra staff at these locations will have a considerable impact. This will complement local action plans already developed for stations experiencing the greatest issues with staff visibility.
- 4.3 London TravelWatch also noted that some stations lack a clear focal point for customers seeking assistance. We are investigating different ways to provide a better and more reassuring service to customers. Opportunities vary depending on station type, so we are looking at the effectiveness of providing more signage and information in different locations (figure 1), changing the location of staff in ticket halls, and trialling high visibility garments (figure 2) and video call points. The first focal point trial was completed at Westminster in December. Further trials commence at King's Cross St. Pancras, Russell Square and Amersham on 20 February 2017, with nine more trials at a variety of different station types to commence in mid-March 2017.



Figure 1: Customer information zone added to unpaid-side of ticket hall

Option one  
 Red Hi-Vis vest  
 LU Roundel, Info 'i' 'EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS'



Figure 2: Red high visibility trial vest

## 5 Customer Assistance

- 5.1 A trial of portal hearing loops, similar to the device shown in Figure 3a, was conducted in January. The device worked well and allowed the conversation to move to quieter areas of the station with less interference. There are other types of loops available, such as the neckloop shown in Figure 3b, which we will be trialling in February. Attention will turn to developing staff training and supporting processes once the most effective type of product is identified.



**Figure 3: Variants of portable induction hearing loops – a) handheld hearing loop; b) neck loop design**

- 5.2 We are trialling extended opening hours at some of our Visitor Centres to determine the extent and nature of demand outside of current hours. Trials are underway at King's Cross St. Pancras, Euston and Heathrow, with further trials planned for Paddington in early March. Early findings suggest that most customers at these times have basic Oyster and refund enquiries.
- 5.3 We have reviewed our staff training, with key sections modified to emphasise the importance of actively offering help to customers, especially those displaying characteristics suggesting that they may require extra help or that they might be unfamiliar with travelling on the network.
- 5.4 An integrated marketing plan is under development to provide customers with better information about our services. Aspects of the plan are already being delivered, for example, emails were sent to annual season ticket holders in December to remind them of how to renew their tickets.

## 6 Purchasing Tickets for Travel

- 6.1 Our trials of providing both boundary extension tickets for customers in possession of non-Zone 1 Travelcards and discounted National Rail through tickets in late 2016 were successful. This additional functionality will be made available at all stations as part of a planned system upgrade in May 2017.

6.2 Following successful testing, a customer pilot of the TfL Oyster and Contactless app launched in early February. The app allows customers to:

- (a) check their pay as you go balance;
- (b) see their season tickets;
- (c) top up pay as you go credit, and buy season tickets; and
- (d) get notifications if their pay as you go balance falls below £10 or season ticket is about to expire

6.3 When customers use the app to top up or buy a season ticket, they will be able to collect it 30 minutes later when they touch on a yellow card reader as part of a journey. Other features, such as the ability to manage contactless payment cards used for travel, will be introduced throughout 2017.

6.4 Information to warn customers of the 48 hour refund rule will be added to ticket machines as part of the ticketing system upgrade in May 2017. Work continues to determine how this functionality can be improved while still providing adequate protection against fraudulent use.

## 7 Next Steps

7.1 We continue to collaborate with London TravelWatch on delivery of the action plan. The London TravelWatch Board received an update at their meeting in January 2017 and their officers will be involved on a regular basis.

7.2 Subject to the Panel's agreement, we will provide a further progress at the panel meeting scheduled for 13 July 2017.

### List of appendices to this report:

None

### Background papers:

TfL Board meeting paper of 15 December 2016.

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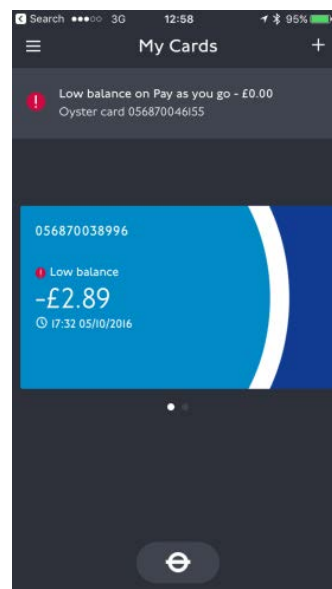


Figure 4: TfL Oyster and Contactless app screenshot