

# Minutes

## Board meeting

**Date:** Wednesday 16 June 2010  
**Location:** Radisson Blu Hotel  
 12 Holloway Circus  
 Queensway  
 Birmingham  
 B1 1BT  
**Time:** 11.00 – 13.00

### Present

#### Board Members

Colin Foxall CBE	CF	Chairman
David Leibling	DLg	
Dr Derek Langslow CBE	DL	
Deryk Mead CBE	DM	
Christine Knights	CK	
Barbara Saunders OBE	BSa	
Stella Mair Thomas	SMT	
Bill Samuel	BS	
Nigel Walmsley	NW	
Mark Seale	MS	

#### Board Bus Advisers

Mike Parker	MP
Peter Wiltshire	PW

#### Executive in Attendance

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Ashwin Kumar	AK	Rail Passenger Director
David Sidebottom	DS	Bus Passenger Director
Jon Carter	JCa	Head of Corporate Services
Paul Fullwood	PF	Passenger Link Manager
Julie Warburton	JW	Passenger Link Manager
Mark Leving	ML	Passenger Link Manager
Matt Ayson	MA	Business Services Executive

#### External Speakers

Stephen Rhodes	SR	Centro, Passenger Services Director
Rafael Cuesta	RC	Centro, Head of Commissioning
Chris Perry	CP	Centro, Head of Transport Operations

#### Apologies

Phil Davis	PD	Board Member
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James King	JK	Board Member
David Burton	DB	Board Member
Gavin Booth	GB	Board Bus Advisor

## 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks and Apologies

Colin Foxall (CF) called the meeting to the order and **noted** apologies for Phil Davis, James King, David Burton and Gavin Booth.

## 2. Minutes of the Board Meeting held in Edinburgh on 12 May 2010

The Board **approved** the minutes and **authorised** the Chairman to sign them.

## 3. Action Matrix

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
<b>BM113</b>	17/02/10	Availability of contact information for passengers wishing to get in touch with Passenger Focus	Issue to be reviewed to ensure contact details are readily available	AK	Jun 2010	<b>Train operating companies have been written to. Processes are in place for reporting and correcting out of date information. Complete. Delete.</b>
<b>BM120</b>	12/05/10	Disability equality strategy	New equality strategy to be developed	JC	Dec 2010	<b>Work in progress</b>
<b>BM121</b>	12/05/10	Network Rail Passenger Link Manager	DM and Mark Leving (ML) to meet	DM/ML	June 2010	<b>Complete. Delete</b>
<b>BM122</b>	12/05/10	East Coast weekend timetable	Letter to be sent to Network Rail requesting production of a weekend timetable	GD	July 2010	<b>Saturday timetable has been produced. Awaiting circulation.</b>
<b>BM123</b>	12/05/10	Virgin customer feedback forms	Ensuring customer feedback forms are available on Virgin Trains	RS	July 2010	<b>Work in progress</b>
<b>BM124</b>	12/05/10	Bus passenger satisfaction survey	Circulate to Board for comment.	DS	June 2010	<b>Has been added to June ME</b>

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		publication timetable				<b>Agenda for comments</b> <b>Complete. Delete</b>
<b>BM125</b>	12/05/10	Bus passenger satisfaction survey	Board to discuss the tone of the bus passenger survey publication	DS	June 2010	<b>Has been added to June ME Agenda for comments</b> <b>Complete. Delete</b>
<b>BM126</b>	12/05/10	Bus team three day training session	Board to be invited and sent details.	DS	June 2010	<b>Dates have been circulated to Board. Session runs from 30 June.</b> <b>Complete. Delete</b>
<b>BM127</b>	12/05/10	Policy Manual Version 1	Circulate to Board	DS	June 2010	<b>Issued to Board on 27 May 2010.</b> <b>Complete. Delete</b>
<b>BM128</b>	12/05/10	Board Bus Group	Reconvene	DS	July 2010	<b>Date now fixed 8 July</b>

#### 4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he was waiting for further details from the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the spending review and its potential effects on Passenger Focus. He also briefed the Board on recent discussions with the ORR in respect of its suggested new role as a consumer champion. He noted that ORR had expressed no desire to encroach upon Passenger Focus's successful remit.

The Chairman had nothing other to report that was not already included on other agenda items.

#### 5. Chief Executive's Report

Anthony Smith (AS) had nothing to report that was not already included on other agenda items.

#### 6. Annual report and accounts 2009-2010

Derek Langslow (DL) presented the audit completion report and certificate of unqualified audit opinion by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The report showed no significant internal control weaknesses. DL commented that this was a credit to the organisation, in particular Nigel Holden (NH) and his team.

DL then presented the annual report and accounts for 2009-10. He drew the Boards attention to a number of amendments proposed by the Audit Committee during their meeting on 8 June 2010.

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DL proposed on behalf of the Audit Committee, and Bill Samuel seconded, that the annual report and accounts for 2009-10 be endorsed, subject to incorporating the minor changes identified. The Board **endorsed** the annual report and accounts on this basis.

CF complimented DL on his work as Chairman of the Audit Committee, commenting on the good state of Passenger Focus's accounting and reporting practices. Bill Samuel (BS) was welcomed as his replacement.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM129	16/06/10	Annual report	Make minor changes to annual report and sign off via AC chairs.	DL/BS/AS	July 2010	

## 7. Bus passenger directors review of passenger and industry facing work

Highlighting key aspects of the report, David Sidebottom (DS) reported that recruitment to the bus passenger link team was now complete. Focus had now shifted to organisational inductions, meeting Passenger Focus colleagues and familiarisation with existing work plans and objectives.

The team's immediate priority is on maintaining and developing existing working relationships in areas where the bus passenger pilots were run and establishing key contacts with influential stakeholders in areas away from the pilots - particularly where bus passenger satisfaction research had taken place. This research has been an important tool in creating awareness and building credibility, with positive feedback being received from stakeholders. Particular interest had been shown in receiving comparative data to show which areas required improvements. This comparative data will eventually lead to many 'wins' for passengers.

On a local level, passenger link team members have been making visits to towns and cities focusing on trialling services and visiting stations and stop facilities. This has been a means to better understand the local networks and the issues that passengers face. Information gathered can immediately be given to operators and authorities with suggestions for improvement. These visits will be a key area of activity for the bus passenger link team in establishing a local presence and identifying potential improvements for passengers.

On a national level, AS and DS have meet with senior executives at First group, Go Ahead group and Stagecoach making sure they are aware of the ongoing research. This has also been important in getting feedback on the industry complaints handling review.

DS reported that meetings had also taken place with tram operators, particularly in Birmingham and Blackpool, to establish where Passenger Focus could be useful, influential and where value can be added to research that has already been conducted. Feedback from the industry had been overwhelmingly positive.

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## 8. Passenger link report: West and East Midlands

Paul Fullwood (PF) summarised bus, coach and tram work in the East Midlands since its formal commencement in February 2010. Stakeholder liaison had taken place with local authorities, the government office, the regional development agency, principle operators and major transport groups – Arriva, First and Stagecoach. The bus passenger priorities research has been a critical tool in engaging with these key stakeholders during these initial meetings.

Mystery traveller surveys have taken place on bus routes in Leicester, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Results have been collated and sent to Leicestershire. Passenger Focus has also been welcomed to join the Nottinghamshire Bus Users Forum.

Nottingham have also recently introduced a Statutory Quality Partnership for the city centre with the aim of improving the reliability of city services by reducing congestion through bus priority measures. PF has received a briefing on this and will continue to be involved. The scheme will have a number of benefits for passengers including additional bus priority measures and the extension of 'real-time' information systems. This is also of particular interest because a similar scheme maybe introduced in Birmingham.

Passenger Focus has also been involved in the planning process for the upgrading of Leicestershire's Star Trak – a real time bus passenger information system.

In the West Midlands significant progress had already been made in stakeholder mapping and liaison due to it being one of the bus passenger pilot areas. Particular focus had been placed on taking forward the bus passenger priorities research – in particular with Shropshire County Council (SCC), where the research was received very positively resulting in improvements to bus stop information. SCC has expressed a keen interest in part funding a follow up survey, with the data being incorporated into their bus strategy programme and tendering exercises. The Council was also particularly interested in the relatively high level of dissatisfaction among younger bus users, and this represented a potential collaborative opportunity.

Passenger Focus has contributed to the Centro review of current bus provision across the West Midlands by commenting on the way that the public consultation process has been followed and by providing passenger priorities research to identify what passengers want to see delivered as a result of the reviews. A commitment had been made by Centro to reflect the research in the Voluntary Multilateral Agreement recently signed in North Walsall and has asked for future involvement in the reviews of other areas.

Bus passenger satisfaction survey results for the West Midlands showed that poor reliability of bus services was a principal cause of dissatisfaction, and therefore a priority for improvement. Passenger Focus worked with volunteers from Bus Users UK to monitor punctuality on a number of routes in Birmingham city centre. This information was shared with the Traffic Commissioner, Centro and National Express. Passenger Focus also worked with Bus Users UK to support a number of surgeries in the West Midlands called Your Bus Matters, which allowed passengers to highlight their concerns.

PF summarised that reliability of service and length of journey was the biggest priority, but also observed that there was strong evidence that antisocial behaviour (ASB) at bus stops was a problem; Passenger

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Focus would test the transferability of ASB rail research. PF introduced Phil Tonks as his Passenger link Executive for the East and West Midlands.

Christine Knights (CK) stated that a lot of stakeholder liaison had taken place and asked whether we were being clear on what they can reasonably expect from Passenger Focus. PF responded that this was a point the passenger link team were well aware of. At this stage it is all about introductions and getting known, which often results in more meetings. In the future the team will have to be more selective based on clear influencing priorities.

Deryk Mead (DM) drew attention to the considerable differences between bus services in rural and urban areas. Rural isolation means that bus services are absolutely key in these areas and DM raised concerns about future cuts to these services. CF asked that DS work on a strategy for rural bus services based on the priorities that these passengers have.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM130	16/06/10	Rural bus strategy	Strategy for rural bus services based on passenger priorities	DS	Sept 2010	

## 9. Transforming bus travel: Centro

CF welcomed Stephen Rhodes (SR), Passenger Services Director; Rafael Cuesta (RC), Head of Commissioning and Chris Perry (CP), Head of Transport Operations for Centro to the Board meeting.

RC presented Centro's report 'Transforming Bus Travel' (TBT) to the Board. TBT sets an agenda for change aimed at delivering a world class public transport system to the West Midlands. By creating a modernised network Centro hope to assist regeneration, improve the economy and sustainability, enable people without a car to have better access and reduce congestion and pollution in the area. The major challenges in achieving these goals will be to get more people using public transport through changing passenger perceptions by improving the quality of services and by managing the consequences of changing public transport demands and travel patterns.

Some of the physical outputs that have been achieved since TBT's introduction 2 years ago have been:

- 310km of highway with Bus Showcase improvements
- 42km of new bus lanes implemented
- 2000+ stops upgraded to DDA standards with new shelters
- 39 major junction improvements to assist buses
- Road widening schemes at 26 locations to improve capacity

This has resulted in:

- 30% Patronage increase on key routes (Coventry Primelines/Rte 51)
- Up to 17% reduction in journey time (Route 51)
- Up to 40% increase in punctuality
- Up to 86% increase in passenger satisfaction levels

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SR reported that over the last 2 years they have been working in partnership with key stakeholders, in particular National Express. This has resulted in improved services on six demonstration routes by adding a mix of new and refurbished buses, improving bus stops and shelters, improving information and coordinating joint marketing exercises. The results of which resulted in an 11.1% increase in patronage. Further partnership work is continuing on improving safety by providing CCTV on all vehicles, developing smart card technology, improving cleanliness, punctuality and frequency. All of which comes through a commitment to putting passengers first.

CF asked how Centro monitor what passengers think. SR reported that they have built partnerships with Passenger Focus and other stakeholders. Work was ongoing on aligning methodology on customer satisfaction surveys. CP added that research was essential, especially benchmarking. Results can then be monitored to help make the improvements that passengers want.

CF asked how public sector cuts will affect Centro and whether proposed Passenger Focus research on passengers' priorities would be useful in any expenditure review. SR added that cuts are likely and that importance will be placed on creating partnerships with other stakeholders in order to get value for money. Any reviews based on passenger priorities, not cost, from Passenger Focus in this area would be useful.

Peter Wiltshire (PW) asked whether the perceived high cost of inner city parking had an effect on bus usage and satisfaction. CP added that around 50% of bus users do not own a car so it wasn't a major issue. Importance had been placed on developing the quality of the bus within the city centres so that those passengers that do own a car have a choice.

DL asked for further information regarding the introduction of Smartcards. CP reported that the aim is to emulate London's Oyster card system. There has been a commitment to introduce smartcards on 50% of bus flow by the end of 2010.

## **10. Passenger Link report: North West**

Julie Warburton (JW) summarised her paper to the Board. Initial work has focused on raising awareness and developing relationships with stakeholders, particularly with local authorities and Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) groups. JW distributed a stakeholder log for April-June 2010.

Passenger Focus has extended its rail relationship with Merseytravel to working with those responsible for the bus networks in the area. Their response has been positive and they are sharing their findings from their complaint handling service with Passenger Focus. Passenger priority research has shown that antisocial behaviour at bus stops was a major concern for passengers in this area. By using Passenger Focus's rail research on antisocial behaviour JW has been working with Merseytravel on improving safety and security of passengers.

JW reported that Arriva Bus Company has worked with Passenger Focus in developing the format of the Passenger Satisfaction survey and reports. Arriva felt reassured that Passenger Focus's research findings

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mirrored theirs. Future work with Arriva Merseyside and Merseytravel will be done in looking at ways of improving personal safety, litter and cleanliness at bus stops and inside of buses.

To date meetings have been held with Lancashire County Council, Cheshire County Council, Halton Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (ITA). The focus of these meetings has been to introduce Passenger Focus. The response from each has been largely positive. Each is keen to better understand the drivers of bus passenger satisfaction and look forward to the findings of our research. Cheshire County Council in particular has indicated a desire to undertake further specific passenger research in the Cheshire area. Lancashire County Council has expressed an interest in our Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvement research. Each of these opportunities will be explored over the coming months.

CK asked if any contact had been made with Bus Users UK in the North West. JW reported that meetings still hadn't taken place but there was a commitment to do so in the future. CF asked that this becomes a priority.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM131	16/06/10	Bus Users UK North West	Organise introductory meeting.	JW	Sept 2010	
BM132	15/06/10	Policing and Area Tasking	To discuss with a view to tackling ASB in Merseytravel area	CK / JW	Sept 2010	

## 11. Network Rail issues

CF welcomed Mark Leving (ML) to his first board meeting. CF made it clear that we must begin to understand Network Rail in a way we never could previously. Highlighting the key aspects of his report, ML reported that the current industry structure was not, in his view, providing an incentive to Network Rail to minimise disruption.

In the current structure TOCs receive compensation on the basis of a regulatory contract (schedule four), which is driven primarily by the amount of notice that Network Rail gives, rather than how much disruption there is. Therefore even if there is severe disruption, compensation can be minimal if enough notice is given and timetabled accordingly. There is also an issue that if a TOC doesn't lose any revenue from the disruption (due to revenue support from the DfT) then they are less incentivised to argue the case hard to keep as many trains as possible operating (because they do not suffer the pain of revenue loss).

These factors have resulted, according to ML, in a gradual creep of the "big bang" closure ethos to embrace smaller schemes, with longer and more frequent total closures, and a declining willingness of Network Rail to use stage working (advance works) to minimise the extent of total closure. There is also a lack of transparency regarding the work undertaken in many disruptive possessions. This may be more efficient for Network Rail but not necessarily for the industry.

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CF asked that we use these observations in order to develop the recommendations as set out in the paper presented to the Board. ML added that first and foremost, in order to influence it was important to be involved in the scheduling process as early as possible, in railway terms GRIP stage 1. The TOCs don't have the resource or interest to be involved in the process early on so engagement should be with stakeholders that have a genuine longer term interest in passengers. This might be as early as 4 or 5 years in advance. The current T-12 arrangement is woefully inadequate.

DM agreed that there was some concern over disruption issues within Network Rail's membership, but reminded the Board that there were also huge concerns over the level of debt, management bonuses, governance and performance.

CF acknowledged that in the past Passenger Focus may not have pushed hard enough when disruption has happened, despite what he referred to as the 'Adonis arrangements'. How were these working? There appeared to be a distinct lack of structure for PLMs to work within. AK agreed that currently there was no 'official' process. CF asked that this be developed as a matter of some urgency, reminding all that the focus must be on outputs and not inputs.

The Board agreed that this issue could be discussed in further detail at its next meeting.

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM133	16/06/10	Network Rail closures	Develop process for dealing with Network Rail closures that cause disruption	AK	Sept 2010	
BM134	16/06/10	Network Rail	Discuss ML's paper on Rail Infrastructure and operations for passenger benefit at July Board meeting	ML	July 2010	

## 12. Any other business

No other business was raised. The Chairman thanked those involved in attendance and closed the meeting at 12.50 pm.

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Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

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Colin Foxall CBE  
Chairman, Passenger Focus

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Date