

DfT Transport Sector Transparency Board - Minutes

Great Minster House, London 9-11am, Thursday 9 May 2013

Attendees: Steve Gooding, DG Domestic, DfT (Chair)
Prof. Jonathan Raper, CEO Placr
Andrew Stott, Public Sector Transparency Board
Nick Illsley, Transport Direct, DfT
Hannah John, Privacy Representative, DfT
Hazel Lee, Cabinet Office
Phil Killingley, DfT Rail
Steve Prichard, DfT Rail
Chris Gibbard, DfT Transport Direct
Phil Young, TfL

Apologies: Christopher Muttukumaru, GCO SIRO, DfT
Miles Gibson, No 10
Tim Stamp, Statistics, DfT
Helen Morris, Driving Agency Sponsor, DfT

Publication of Rail subsidy

1. The Board discussed a presentation from DfT Rail, which provided an update on progress delivering the transparency commitments in last year's Command Paper.
2. The Board discussed whether subsidy data for rail service groups and flows could be published for Directly Operated Railways (DOR), with a methodology using the fares data in the Lennon system. The data has not been released to date due to concerns around its complexity and how it should be presented publicly to ensure it is understood correctly.
3. The Board discussed whether a long term option might be to put something into new franchise agreements and renewals to build in a transparency commitment.

Action: Rail to be the main topic of the next Sector Board and ORR to be invited to consider options for greater transparency on fares data.

VOSA Bus Registrations

4. The Board discussed progress on this issue. The focus had shifted from transparency on the 20% electronic registrations to trying to obtain release of the catalogue of all registrations. This is an encoded summary of paper and electronic applications. We await a decision on publication from the Office of the Traffic Commissioners.

Action: TSB to invite Senior TC to next meeting or for separate discussion

TfL Open Data

5. The Board discussed a presentation from Phil Young, Head of TfL Online which outlined why TfL felt transparency was important and how it was progressing. There are now 5000 developers registered on the TfL Open Data section of the London Data portal.
6. A key consideration for TfL as the use of transport apps grows is how to maintain a channel of access to passengers for safety and communication purposes. TfL are doing some internal policy evaluation and assessment on how the app market may evolve and potential solutions for getting messages out. One of these solutions may be to move into the app market themselves, but this would be subject to stringent assessment on the effects on the market and would also be a significant change as to date they have not released apps unless market failure has been identified.

Action: TfL to keep TSB updated on internal policy development and consult more widely when a direction of travel has been formulated

Action: TfL to confirm when it intends to move to an Open Government License

7. The Board discussed the new consolidated API, which will be launched shortly, and the need to ensure that developers building apps based on the current APIs are not disadvantaged. TfL confirmed it would be announcing the API shortly and inviting developers to a hackathon prior to launch.

Action: TfL to undertake some communications around its new API, including a commitment for short term dual running

8. The Board discussed TfL's idea for an app garden linked to the website, and how best to connect app garden membership to greater access to developer channels and the ability to influence app development.
9. The Board discussed TfL's difficulties in accessing some NRE data relating to the real-time running of London Overground services, where NRE wants to charge for access and won't let TfL publish it as Open Data. The Board noted that fundamental change may be difficult, because NRE is a member organisation and also benefits from affiliate fees when people book tickets via a link from the timetables. In the shorter term the Board felt the TOCs operating under a different financial model, such as DOR, could set an example in making the data available if it was not in turn bound by the restrictions of its membership of NRE/ATOC, and could perhaps be able to influence NRE over time. It was also noted that train

running data is available from Network Rail as part of their transparency programme.

Action: NI to investigate whether and how the publicly owned TOCs can release this data, and TFL to do the same for LORL

HS2

10. The Board discussed a paper by HS2 and noted that its current approach to the release of route design data was not in line with Government policy, albeit for understandable motives in seeking to ensure that the debate about the route was informed by the most up-to-date designs by requiring applicants to signing up for release of this data (and thus be automatically registered for updates). However, the overarching policy was that registration for data should be optional, not mandatory.

Action: NI to invite HS2 review their website policy

AOB

11. Traveline - The future of Traveline and Transport Direct is being considered as part of the Spending Round, the major spending decisions will be announced on 26 June, with more details becoming clear in the following weeks.

Action: The TSB agreed to discuss this at the September meeting

12. Manchester - JR expressed concern that the content and timing of a tendering process by Manchester Council meant that they risked contracting to buy services that would, by the time the procurement concluded, have been made publicly available.

Action: NI to discuss separately with Local Directorate/Greater Manchester

Updates from last minutes & actions

13. **Rail** - JR commented that the routing guide has been released on paper but not digitally which makes ATOC's release of the fares database unusable.

14. **Streetworks** - JR highlighted that the TSB had still not received an answer from Geoplace and OS, regarding access to the Associated Street Data and he was concerned this was giving Geoplace a commercial advantage in the market.

15. **CAA** - the CAA will attend in June to update the TSB on progress and are planning to engage more widely with the open data community

16. **VOSA MOT** - there is no date yet for the release of garage based data consultation.
17. **EU Merits transport data** - NI has had no success with the EU but has highlighted it as a "quick win" for the Commission to consider, and JR clarified that ATOC are allowed to release it, but are not obliged to do so as a free service.
18. **Open Data Releases** - NI has arranged for the document to be republished. He clarified that it only included the major releases the TSB has been involved in; a full list of all releases could be found on data.gov.

Action: NI to change "infrequent" to "at least annually" on the table

19. **Big data** - HL explained that CO were trying to move away from this phrase as they recognised that industry used the terminology differently. The policy in this area will be reviewed as part of the Digital Strategy review later this year.
20. **Date of Next Meeting Thursday 13th June at 13:30**