Agenda Item

GNLRT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9th July 2009

RESULTS OF 2008 NET CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, ARROW LIGHT RAIL

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

1.1. The report discusses the results of the 2008 NET Customer Satisfaction Survey. It assesses areas in which satisfaction has fallen or dissatisfaction has been expressed and, where possible, suggests ways of addressing the issues raised.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes this report.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. As reported to the last meeting of the Committee, the overall results of the NET Line One Customer Satisfaction Survey, undertaken in October 2008, are very positive, indicating that the tram remains very popular with its customers. There are some areas in which satisfaction has fallen year-on-year and others in which dissatisfaction has been expressed. This report analyses these results and suggests ways of addressing the areas of dissatisfaction where this is possible.

3.2. A more detailed analysis of the results of the survey can be found at the following website address: www.thetram.net.

3.3. The survey questions were divided into those relating to satisfaction with the journey and those relating to satisfaction at the tramstop.

4. SATISFACTION WITH JOURNEY

4.1. Satisfaction scores, which have remained very high or static over the past four years, are presented in Table I. With the score for 2008 rated at 92% of passengers being satisfied with NET journeys, this is considerably higher than equivalent bus ratings in the city for NCT & Trent Barton, both award winning bus operators.

4.2. The figures underlined indicate an improvement year on year. Comments upon each of the issues which have fallen since last year are detailed below, however it should be noted that the results for 2007 in some areas appeared to improve significantly compared to the 2 previous years' research.

4.3. This data was checked and confirmed to be valid by the researchers (Keydata). A change in the format of the survey may account for these differences. It is important therefore to look at the results of this year against all 3 previous years to really get a feel for any trends.

Reliability

4.4. Reliability is slightly down. This reflects the closures earlier in the year at the Royal Centre, although interestingly disruptions information has scored better.

Ease of buying a ticket

4.5. Remains high, but down on 2007. This is disappointing given the promotion and growth of "off tram" ticket sales (Paypoint). It is assumed that this reflects the conductors' ability to cover all passengers travelling particularly at peak time due to physical restraints. During 2009 we are continuing to promote Paypoint and easy rider pre-paid options with a wide range of promotions and advertising activities. A Paypoint counter selling NET tickets has also recently been opened at the NCT Travel Centre. However, the survey shows good progress in terms of passenger satisfaction for price and the range of tickets available, this probably reflects the increased awareness of Paypoint ticket options.

Ease of getting on & off

4.6. Remains high. This has a direct relationship with passenger numbers which at peak times is challenging. Non-peak ticket prices are designed to ease the load travelling at peak times, but in this instance the tram is a victim of its own success. Conductors do urge passengers to move down the tram when appropriate.

Cleanliness

4.7. Slightly down on 2007. This may reflect the physical ageing of the tram rather than cleanliness itself. During 2009 the seats are being re-covered which will hopefully improve passenger perception. In addition, we are working with the tram maintainer to improve the pro-active monitoring of tram interiors.

Journey time

4.8. This has not actually changed, and cannot be altered. It is quicker to make the same journey by tram than bus.

Printed Timetable Leaflet

4.9. This has now been redesigned in an easier to use format with a bigger font size. In addition a mini- timetable (wallet size) has been introduced.

Friendliness of Staff

4.10. This should be viewed with caution and all 4 years' results considered since, whilst satisfaction fell from 2007-2008, it still remains significantly above 2006 levels. That said, however, the critical role that our staff play in retaining customers is recognized and we have included Customer Care within our ongoing refresher training programme.

Other Comments - Too Expensive

4.11. The score for price / range of tickets improved compared to previous years, however when passengers responded to questions about improvements they would like to see, price was a significant comment.

4.12. Compared to other modes of travel in the city and indeed elsewhere in the UK, the cost of Travel on NET is not expensive. Details of the main fares are as follows:

- All day Tram ticket (unlimited journeys) - £2.70
- All day NCT bus & Tram ticket (unlimited Journeys) - £3.00
- Paypoint 3 tram days – £7.50
- Tram weekly ticket £12
- Paypoint 7 tram days £10.80
- Paypoint 30 tram days £31.50
- Easyrider city (bus & tram unlimited travel)
    - 28 days from £42
    - 1 month from £40
    - 3 months £120
    - 6 months £220
    - 1 year £350 – less than £1 per day!

There are of course discounts for children and students.

4.13. It is however relatively expensive to travel at peak times on a single ticket at £2.50 (all day ticket £2.70) and it is believed that this is what is driving this perception.

4.14. As stated earlier, considerable work is being done to promote the range of ticket options available, in particular the Paypoint pre-purchased tickets via advertising and promotional activities. There is also now much clearer information about all the ticket options in the timetables and at tram stops.

5. SATISFACTION AT TRAMSTOP

5.1. Overall satisfaction levels with tramstops (Table II) have improved year on year, with a noticeably improved perception regarding the security at the Park and Ride sites and security on route to the stop.

5.2. As before, the underlined figures indicate an improvement year on year. Again however, it should be noted that the results for 2007 in some areas appeared to improve significantly compared to the 2 previous years' research. It is important therefore to look at the results of this year against all 3 previous years to really get a feel for any trends.

Passenger Information

5.3. High, but down on 2007. Information at stops was reformatted to be more informative and easier to use in Spring 2009.

Cleanliness / Condition

5.4. Slightly down on 2007. We are surprised at this score as the duties and numbers of tramstop cleaning staff has not changed. As with the trams themselves, it is possible that this reflects the age of the tramstops and associated surroundings.

Electronic displays

5.5. Remains high, but down on 2007. The functionality of electronic displays is remotely monitored and forms part of the Performance Monitoring Regime. No significant defects occurred during 2008 and we believe that this result might be as a result of the limitations of the equipment in terms of providing detailed messages (a maximum of 50 characters of “free text” can be displayed).

Lighting

5.6. A minor reduction in satisfaction - again very hard to understand in detail as the overall performance of the system lighting has not fallen significantly.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Customer perceptions and views of the tram are high and remain consistently good even in its fifth year of operation. The tram has assisted in really changing local views on public transport as a means of travel. This attitude towards public transport has been also assisted by the continued development of the Trent Barton offer and the step change in the NCT provision over the same period of time.

6.2. The scores on the Tram are excellent and certainly enviable compared to similar surveys on bus routes and it is considered that the actions taken and in hand will address any weaknesses shown in the 2008 survey results.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1. NET Customer Satisfaction Survey 2008.

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1. None

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TABLE I	Base				Net Satisfaction			
	2008	2007	2006	2005	**2008**	2007	2006	2005
Overall onboard	**-**	-	-	-	**77%**	75%	59%	59%
Price / range of tickets	**1190**	999	1272	1227	**67%**	47%	45%	47%
Reliability	**1103**	1119	1352	1228	**81%**	88%	67%	71%
Ease of buying a ticket	**1066**	898	1284	1229	**80%**	86%	69%	69%
Ease of getting on/off	**1276**	1309	1408	1345	**82%**	85%	66%	67%
Cleanliness inside	**1240**	1311	1408	1346	**81%**	84%	67%	67%
Disruptions information	**1164**	1210	1237	1160	**73%**	71%	52%	55%
Disruptions resolution	**N/a**	N/a	1190	1120	**N/a**	N/a	48%	54%
Journey time	**1094**	1119	1346	1297	**80%**	88%	68%	66%
Air conditioning	**1050**	1085	1327	1250	**72%**	61%	51%	45%
Seating comfort	**1088**	1122	1314	1255	**73%**	60%	47%	37%
Printed timetable leaflet	**1041**	866	1242	1181	**77%**	80%	61%	61%
Friendliness of staff	**1295**	1330	1407	1343	**83%**	92%	70%	70%
Provision for buggies and disabled persons	**1081**	851	861	795	**75%**	62%	47%	45%

*The average score is based on the following scale:

1	-	Very Dissatisfied
2	-	Dissatisfied
3	-	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
4	-	Satisfied
5	-	Very Satisfied

TABLE II	Base				Net Satisfaction			
	2008	2007	2006	2005	**2008**	2007	2006	2005
Overall at Tram Stop	**-**	-	-	-	**78%**	75%	58%	59%
Passenger info	**1323**	1342	1415	1345	**84%**	92%	72%	74%
Security at P&R sites	**1024**	897	945	908	**70%**	53%	38%	36%
Cleanliness / condition	**1295**	1328	1424	1340	**81%**	86%	65%	67%
NET signage	**N/a**	N/a	1198	1172	**N/a**	N/a	75%	63%
Tram stop shelters	**1076**	1108	1280	1225	**77%**	71%	55%	48%
Electronic displays	**1292**	1325	1420	1338	**85%**	94%	72%	74%
Security on route to tram stop	**1273**	1300	1186	1138	**66%**	60%	39%	44%
Lighting	**1069**	1089	1304	1268	**78%**	81%	61%	60%
Litter bins	**1073**	1090	1271	1201	**76%**	69%	52%	54%

*The average score is based on the following scale:

1	-	Very Dissatisfied
2	-	Dissatisfied
3	-	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
4	-	Satisfied
5	-	Very Satisfied