

Nottingham City Council

Greater Nottingham Light Rapid Transit Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at the Wilkinson Street NET Depot - Armstrong Way, Nottingham, NG7 7NW on 8 January 2020 from 10:05am to 11:08am

Membership

Present

Councillor Adele Williams (Chair)
Councillor Phil Rostance (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jim Creamer
Councillor Samuel Gardiner
Councillor Eric Kerry
Councillor AJ Matsiko

Absent

Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Dave Liversidge
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis

NET User Representatives in attendance:

- Roger Bacon (Travel Watch East Midlands)
- ✓ Nick Chischniak (East Midlands Chamber of Commerce)
- Justin Donne (Nottingham Federation of Small Businesses)
- ✓ Helen Hemstock (RideWise)
- ✓ Hugh McClintock (Pedals)
- Chris Roy (Nottingham Trent University)
- ✓ Jim Thomas (Nottinghamshire Better Transport)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

- Nigel Bratton - Revenue and Operations Manager, Tramlink Nottingham
- Andrew Conroy - Chief Operating Officer, Tramlink Nottingham
- Andrew Holdstock - Senior NET Project Engineer
- Kate Knight - Assistant NET Project Manager
- Tom Jayamaha - Citizen
- Mike Mabey - Head of Operations, Nottingham Trams
- Constantina - Customer Services Manager, Nottingham Trams
- Samara
- Adrian Mann - Governance Officer

18 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Dave Liversidge
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis

19 Declarations of Interests

None.

20 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

The Chair noted that there were some issues on the network relating to lighting on paths that run adjacent to the tramway, and how cycle lanes were configured relative to tram stop platforms, and that these would be discussed in more detail at an upcoming meeting of the Local Access Forum.

21 NET Operational Update

Mike Mabey, Head of Operations at Nottingham Trams, presented a report on the operational performance and progress for NET from the beginning of September to the end of November 2019. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the reliability and punctuality of the tram service remains high, at 98.2% and 93.4%, respectively. Despite the heavy rainfall and flooding during November, tram services continued to operate, although there were some delays. However, performance was affected by some outside issues including cars entering tram-only sections, a number of road traffic collisions with trams and increased traffic congestion due to roadworks. The Operator is also aware of issues concerning cars driving on the tram-only section at the Forest tram stop. Steps are being taken with the Council's Highways team to introduce further road signage improvements around the network to limit other road vehicles using tram-only routes;
- (b) there have also been issues of pedestrians walking along the Nottingham station viaduct, where the situation is being monitored and warning signage is in place. However, larger physical barriers are not being put in place at this time, as these might cause people who persist in using the viaduct as a pedestrian route to walk onto the tracks to avoid them. It is hoped that the situation will improve when the Broadmarsh redevelopment is completed;
- (c) to improve performance and limit the impact of disruption, the control room records all incidents that happen on the network, which are then used to develop solutions for future incidents. Learning and best practice is shared with all controllers. Engagement has also been carried out with the local Emergency Services to ensure that, whenever possible, response vehicles do not block the tram tracks;
- (d) Goose Fair and Bonfire Night – two annual events that have a substantial impact on the number of people using the tram network – took place during this period at the Forest recreation ground, with increased passenger numbers increasing to previous years. The timetable was amended to improve the travelling experience and minimise the wait times for customers, with more frequent and additional services. The tram service remained strong during both events – despite further congestion on the road network being caused by a significant traffic accident and a broken-down bus;
- (e) an 'Ambassador' role was introduced to support Travel Officers and provide further assistance for customers during the run up to Christmas, where the trams were used by a record level of people. The Ambassadors were placed at the busier tram stops to check customer tickets and passes prior to boarding, assist

them in purchasing tickets via the ticket vending machines, and inform them about the NETGO! app and its benefits;

- (f) the free NETGO! app was released in late September, with the official launch on 14 October, and feedback from customers has been very positive. The app allows customers to purchase single, day, weekly and group tickets, as well as view the network map and receive timetable and service updates. To encourage downloads, ticket prices on the app are cheaper than the same fare purchased via a ticket machine. There have been more than 27,500 downloads of the app to date and the number of transactions made continues to increase, with little evidence of revenue being taken from other sources. On 29 November ('Black Friday'), 2,336 ticket purchases were made – the most transactions made via the app in one day, so far. It is intended to develop the app to include improved customer information and the ability to purchase season tickets. Due to changes at Trent Barton, Mango cards will cease to be valid on the tram from 1 April. Information on this change has been displayed at tram stops since 10 September, along with communications to customers by other channels;
- (g) in September, Travel Officers began using body cameras to provide an additional level of security for customers and staff, and to act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. This is in addition to the CCTV cameras already in use at tram stops and on trams. The body cameras capture both image and sound, and the recordings can be shared with Nottinghamshire Police if it is necessary to secure a prosecution. The cameras are mounted on magnetic clasps so that if somebody being record tries to grab and pull the camera, it will detach easily and not cause the Travel Officer to be pulled over. To date, body cameras have been activated on more than 60 occasions, with arrests being made in two cases;
- (h) the 'Try the Tram' event took place in October at the Hucknall tram stop, in collaboration with Nottingham City Council, with schools and disability groups. The event was a strong success and had very positive feedback. Following an internal campaign, which started during the summer track works, asking drivers to communicate more with their customers, drivers are now being encouraged to make announcements to welcome customers onto the tram. A number of positive comments have been received regarding these announcements. The announcements will be used to encourage good passenger behaviour (such as not blocking doors or putting luggage or feet on seats), and the Health and Safety team have also been visiting schools to promote this message;
- (i) NET is seeking an accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) and, as part of this, has surveyed its customers and staff. A benchmarking report from the ICS awarded NET a score of 83 out of 100, which is well above the transport sector average of 71. The results from the Institute gave NET an 8.5 out of 10 rating for customers recommending the network to others, where the sector average is 7 out of 10. Customers also report that they found Nottingham's trams easier to use than other forms of public transport;
- (j) the NET Customer Services department introduced a new Customer Relationship Management System ('Freshdesk') in October 2018. The key objectives of the new system were to improve customer experience, introduce live chat, link all communications on a single platform and increase productivity when responding

to customers. As a result of the new system, the Customer Services team dealt with 800% more customer enquiries during 2018-19 compared to the previous year, due in part to the capacity to respond much more quickly. Future plans include contact provision through WhatsApp, a live chat bot to respond quickly to generic enquiries, and new disruption maps (which will include information on alternative travel routes);

- (k) the system also provides the capability for proactive customer engagement, such as sending automated feedback surveys to customers after their interaction with a customer service representative. Customers are sent the automated feedback form every time they are in touch with Customer Services, but do not receive follow-up or repeated requests for a response if they do not reply to the first request. So far, 4877 surveys have been sent to passengers, asking them to rate their customer experience. Of these, 932 surveys were completed, with 635 passengers rating their experience as extremely positive. Currently, there is not a mechanism to respond to surveys within the NETGO! app, but work is underway to try and engage with as wide a range of passengers as possible;
- (l) in the last 12 months, 80% of customer contact was for general enquiries, with ticket queries being the highest reason – a review of ticketing has concluded that there are far too many options, so these will be streamlined to be less confusing to customers. Passengers have raised a total of 399 commendations, 302 of which have related to passenger communications and staff behaviour across various parts of the network. One of the features of the new system is the monitoring of First Call Resolution, which shows the number of customer queries that are answered successfully at the first point of contact. An internal target has been set at 80% for First Call Resolution, and an average of 76% was achieved in 2018-19. On average, all customer contact is responded to within two hours of the enquiry being raised, with a final response provided within 15 hours;
- (m) complaints are received for a variety of reasons, but they form the minority of overall customer contact. The majority of complaints are due to disruptions to the scheduled service. Over the last 12 months, only 1% of complaints have been escalated from the first point of contact to the Deputy Customer Service Manager, and 0.3% to the Customer Service Manager. In total, only two complaints have required escalation to the Committee;
- (n) the tram network achieved the ‘Most Improved System’ award at the Global Light Rail Awards, held in October. Judges were impressed by how NET had boosted customer journeys by 5.7%, invested in a major tram refurbishment programme and introduced a range of initiatives to drive up operational performance. As part of the initiative to recognise the contributions of local people to their community, Sophie Robson, a nurse in the Assessment Unit of Nottingham Children’s Hospital, was named overall winner at the NET-sponsored awards on 14 October – so her name will now appear on one of the trams for a twelve-month period. Sophie came first in a public vote following her nomination by the mother of one of her patients. The tram naming ceremony took place at the depot on 16 December.

The Committee noted the performance report.

22 NET Safety and Accessibility Update

The Chair noted that the Committee intended to discuss network accessibility and representation for users with a disability in depth at its March meeting. She suggested that a member of the City Council's Disability Involvement Group should be invited to attend. Councillor Eric Kerry felt that it would also be helpful to seek a representative from a similar group from the County area.

Mike Mabey, Head of Operations at Nottingham Trams, explained that groups representing disabled users were engaged with during the planning of any new stops and trams, and that a great deal of work had been carried out to inform people of the accessibility support systems available to them in using the network. Work has also been carried out to improve the procedures to prevent child/parent separation, where incidents have been reduced substantially.

23 Issues raised by Committee Members and Citizens

Kate Knight, Assistant Project Manager at NET, presented a report on a complaint from a member of the public. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the passenger purchased a ticket from the ticket machine at Toton Lane to travel to Nottingham Station, using a debit card. However, on a ticket inspection by a Travel Officer during the journey, it was discovered that the passenger had picked up a receipt from the machine, but not a ticket. In addition, the receipt picked up by the passenger was not their receipt so, when the Travel Officer compared the number on the receipt to the number on the card used for the purchase, the numbers did not match;
- (b) as the passenger had neither a valid ticket nor proof of purchase of a valid ticket, they were asked to leave the tram. As the passenger refused to leave the tram, they were then issued with a Penalty Fare Notice, and the Travel Officer explained the appeal process. The next day, the passenger contacted NET Customer Services. A full investigation was carried out and it was confirmed that the passenger had used a card to purchase a ticket from the Toton Lane ticket machine. Due to this, the passenger's Penalty Fare Notice was cancelled.
- (c) The Committee considered that it is reasonable and appropriate for a Travel Officer to request a passenger to leave the tram if they cannot present either a valid ticket or proof of purchase of a valid ticket for their journey. It also felt that it is proportionate for a Travel Officer to issue a Penalty Fare Notice if the passenger then refuses to disembark at the next stop. It noted that, once the passenger had provided proof of purchase of a ticket at a later date, the Penalty Fare Notice had been cancelled;
- (d) it concluded that, ultimately, it is the responsibility of the passenger to ensure that they are in possession of a valid ticket before embarking onto a tram. It considered that, as such, the management of this case by Nottingham Trams had been proportionate, reasonable and appropriate, and that no further action is required.

- (e) The Committee noted that the two-year ticket machine improvement process to reduce the number of paper tickets and receipts dispensed automatically into the collection trough in the ticket machines is nearly complete, and that this and the introduction of a contactless payment mechanism to ticket machines before the end of March should reduce the generation of unnecessary paper receipts and make similar mistakes by customers less likely in the future.

Resolved that Nottingham Trams had handled the complaint correctly and reasonably, and that no further redress to the complainant is required.

24 Forward Planner

The Chair introduced the Committee's Forward Plan for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

25 Future Meeting Dates

- **Tuesday 10 March 2020 at 2:00pm (Loxley House)**