**Richmond Mobility Forum and Transport Action Group**

**Thursday 30 July, 11am - 1pm**

**Attendees**

Amber Debenham, Alan Benson, Amanda Winterburn, Amelia Maguire, Brian Gordon, Bruno Meekings, Carol Stacey, Deborah Carter, Gareth Bubbins, James Pickard, Malcolm Claridge, Matthew Howie, Margo Turner, Michael Adlington, Paul Leonard, Piers Allen, Yvonne Benson, Jamie, Laura

**Apologies:** John Clarke

**Introduction**

The Richmond Mobility Forum and Transport Action Group is a group for any resident in the London Borough of Richmond (LBRuT), who wants to make transport in the borough more accessible. The meetings are structured to include presentations about transport issues, an opportunity to have a questions and answers, as well as time to have informal conversations about current transport issues. The meetings are combined with Your Say attendees and chaired by their Chairman, Alan Benson.

These are the minutes of the 22nd meeting of the Richmond Mobility Forum and Transport Action Group.

1. **Welcome and Minutes of Last Meeting**

Alan Benson (Chairman) welcomes everyone and leads the introductions in the first ZOOM Mobility Forum. There were no significant actions from last meeting.

**2. Update from Transport for London**

**James Pickard (JP)**, Stakeholder Communications Executive at TfL)

**Transport and Streetspace changes**

As part of the Mayors Streetspace programme, roads across the city are being widened and space is being giving space to new cycle lanes and wider pavements to enable social distancing. The primary aim is to taketh pressure off buses, trains and tube services, making it easier to social distance whilst encouraging greener travel.

**Questions and answers**

**AB:** *What about bus and tube services across London? How are they being kept clean, how full are they and what about assistance?*

Ridership on the tube is down, at the height of the pandemic it was down 80% and there was a similar decrease in bus use. there are still social distancing protocols on both on the London Underground and other services and there is an enhanced cleaning regime

**AB:** *Are the usual timetables running?*

**JP:** Yes, services are back operating a usual timetable par for the night tube and a few of tube stations including South Wimbledon which is due to open mid-August.

**AD:** *Are you looking at lowering the age of charging on the child oyster, had heard a rumour*

**JP:** No plans on changing this as far as he is aware at present.

**AD:** Question about Freedom passes restrictions on buses

**AB:** Some restrictions have been added, there are ***no restrictions on Disabled Peoples passes, but*** there are for younger people's free oyster travel until the school terms starts and also restrictions for older people.

**AD** made a point that some peoples shopping slots for vulnerable people e.g. older are very early in the morning so it is affecting some of those who need these the most.

**AB:** Made the point there is still a significant campaign with Travel Watch etc. trying to reverse those decisions

**DC**: Think there has been some confusion, Deborah has been told she can now use her pass from 9am when she has been travelling to work.

**BM**: How are you involving people with access and mobility difficulties in decisions around any shifts or changes to services?

**JP:** Not entirely sure but can feedback, get feedback from groups such as these but there also other discussions going on with other groups internally.

**AB**: Within TfL there is an equalities impact assessment group that meet weekly to make assessments about the impact of protected groups of service and street changes but that's entirely an internal group. There is also currently an Access Forum where TfL have consulted on plans and projects but they are being done retrospectively at present rather than proactively as things are changing so quickly at present. At Transport for All we feel there needs to be further consultation, this is underdevelopment as we progress through ‘the new normal’

**MH:** Wondering how you are monitoring loading on carriages or is it a free for all?

**JP:** At the moment numbers aren’t too high but they will enforce a queuing system if necessary, so that the trains don’t get too crowded.

**Jamie**: is the company responsible for the bus ramps still closed and furloughed?

**BG:** Looking to launch a new ramp on the buses which will be trialled at the end of August. Can let people know when this happens so that people can test them, looks as though it's the same length and in one piece.

**BG:** Last Disability Forum last week highlighted that most of the information is being put out over the internet and some of the elderly and parts of the disabled community do not use the internet and require physical forms. Therefore, the media and press team are looking into getting paper forms delivered.

**3. Update from Richmond Council**

**Margo Turner (MG)**, Principal Transport Planner at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

Brief overview of funding situation

Richmond Council Transport team is primarily funded by an annual settlement from Transport for London called Local Implementation Plan (LIP). This funding has been suspended this year. So, plans have had to be put on hold.

Instead as part go London Streetscapes Plan they’ve been able to bid for specific projects:

* Space and Town Centres
* Strategic Cycle Routes
* Local Neighbourhoods

Bid for funding under all three categories and received funding for school streets, cycling routes on Kew Road, Hampton Court Road and Castleneu,

Also received funding from another fund for Twickenham and Teddington town Centres and for a temporary scheme in Richmond Town Centre. These are all temporary schemes that are meant to be implemented nay the end of September.

Have also put in further bids for second rounds of funding for: low traffic neighbourhoods or strategic cycle routes for the second part of the financial year.

**Comments and Questions from attendees**

**CS:** At Teddington Broad Street going towards Hampton Court, as part of making the pavements wider, it is harder to see the bus signs and Carol worries about disabled people and wheelchair users getting on and off buses.

**MT:** Will take the issue up with the engineer about unstop visibility to have a look at them and see if they can improve it. Email address to report potential issues: **socialdistancing@richmond.gov.uk**

**DC** asked about Kew Road cycle lanes and the parking that has been taken away from there. Car park at Kew Gardens is relatively small and difficult to navigate. Is the cycle path being put into place as a permanent feature? Worried about whether they can take people from FiSH in the minibus.

**MT:** The temporary scheme will become a permanent scheme, starting construction on the cycle lanes in 2 weeks, there will be armadillos to maintain the cycle lanes. Have had meeting with Kew Gardens to discuss the scheme and Coach Parking is a big concern of theirs. The current plan for coaches will be that the drop off with be, near Kew Green at the Gate. Also working around a one-way system around the green to help facilitate movement. The Kew Road Cycle Lane held up to about 150 cars, think together in the side roads that they can put together 100 spaces in side streets and that having spoken to Kew Gardens they have said that the car park only really gets full in August and a few weekends in the Spring.

*Blue Badge holders can park in the car park for free or any on street parking for free.*

**Jamie** asked what provision there is for non-traditional and inclusive cycles,

**MT:** The cycle lanes are being developed with TfL and are wider than usual so safer and more friendly to wider bicycles. Also looking at improving their offer for non-standard cycles and cargo bikes. TfL have now opened up funding so they can put in bids for cycle parking and hangers.

**AB** asked about the new project to assist purchase of non-standard cycles e.g. electric, cargo, tricycle. It has been quietly launched, a ‘try before you buy’ scheme. You can rent the bike for a month or rent to buy and can also get a one to one cycling session (this has been harder during the pandemic with social distancing)

**AW** tends to use cycle lanes with her mobility scooter to get away from traffic, concern about the armadillo bumps which can make it very hard to avoid the traffic.

MT They are spaced out so there are breaks, a car can’t pull into them easily but imagine there is enough space, it is mainly gaps.

**Jamie:** What is the impact assessment process

**MT:** All being safety audited by TfL, it includes an element of disability review, everything is quite rushed as it needs to be completed by September.

**AB:** Doesn’t believe the inclusion and disability consultations are enough. Alan is actively pursuing looking to get this process improved.

**School Streets:**

School streets essentially means the closure of the street for an hour at drop off and pick up time aimed to improve air quality and safety and encourage kids to cycle or walk to school. 19 Streets in Richmond borough have been identified.

If you live on the street you can be a white list holder so you can drive in and out of your street during this time. Likewise, Blue Badge holders are exempt and kids who have access issues can be driven up to the school. There will br no hard and fast rules or enforcements but it is hoped it will lead to a 90% reduction in car traffic.

Hoping for the School Streets to be implemented in September. Initially the streets will be manned by volunteers, primarily parents before cameras are put in place to enforce the rules.

**Comments and Questions from attendees**

**PA**: Comment about being in touch with Wheels for Wellbeing

**AB:** Knows that on the Active travel group members are involved and so they are considered in the discussions.

**4. Update from South Western Railway**

**Michael Adlington (MA)**, Accessibility and Inclusion Manager at SWR

* Service provision in Richmond Borough (under the metro area) is running at near 100% the usual services. Longer distance across country services are reduced.
* Department of transport wants an 100% service by September but this isn’t viable, aiming for 85%. They would need 500 staff members, rather than staffing in the low 400s.
* Better to have fewer trains running than knock on delays or train cancellations.
* Usage of trains was at about 5% of the usual during the peak of the pandemic and has now risen to between 10-18%. With aiming to keep 2m distancing this is really all we can do.
* In terms of cleanliness there is a much better cleaning regime in place, using very expensive high quality disinfectant, Zoono Z-71 with antiviral which can last up to 30 days.
* Messaging has changed a bit over the past few weeks from only travel if absolutely necessary with a lot of clear directive words, whereas the messaging is now a bit more subtle and about being mindful about hygiene and considering
* Very hard for staff to enforce rules and behaviour unless the police are there.
* National Rail and all local train companies decided to give out the same message about assistance and asking people to pre-book if possible so that staff could prepare and have prior guidance on what to do.
* If you require assistance, you will still get it but the method of it taking place may be different e.g. a staff member may escort you to the lift but is unlikely to get in, they are more likely to meet you the other side after taking the stairs or another staff member will meet you.
* Nobody has a clue what customer base looks like, don’t expect even 50% customers back by the end of September.

**Comments and Questions from attendees**
**Jamie** asked about the compensation scheme for December

**MA:** In December there were 30 days of strikes, had a battle with department for transport saying need to compensate people. Agreement with gov only agreed just before lockdown and then there of course Covid 19 compensation claims whilst the refunds centre closed so that there was nobody administering refunds. Advice is to get in touch and send overs much information and evidence as possible to get a refund.

**Sunflower Lanyard Scheme** being rolled out if people with hidden disabilities would like to wear one e.g. may not be able to wear masks. Boxes have been sent out to some of their flagship stations including Richmond and Vauxhall, Ruils may be able to get a cheeky box to distribute to our clients. Staff at the stations who are exempt will have a company specific lanyard or badge.

**Question: *Turn up and go is this still happening?***

Trying to get back to normal but for now, if you know for definite when you are going please pre-book however it’s not a problem if you don’t. It’s probably fine at larger stations like Richmond but can be more difficult at stations like Whitton that don’t have station staff. If they know in advance the guard will be texted to give prior warning to look out for somebody.

**MA** along with another colleague has been shortlisted for a National Rail Award for an **Assisted Boarding Points Project**, waiting for the Department of Transport to give them the money. The idea is that you as the customer there will be a designated point at the platform with a telephone and **WhatsApp** number and you can then WhatsApp them when you’re on the way to the station and they can text the guard. Only been trialled at 6 stations so far, in our patch Teddington and Hampton.

**DC** (Transport Manager at FiSH) commended Michael for this project as WhatsApp is very food for the hearing impaired and other disabled clients.

**Lifts at Twickenham**

Should be fully operational (Network Rail are the infrastructural body and landlord for them). Issue as staff go home at about 11pm but trains are still running up until about 1am and there was a case where a disabled client was left on the platform with a non-functioning lift. Have raised this issue to Network Rail. All accessibility related complaints do report them to Michael if there are issues!

**AB** has heard Southern Rail are now investigating every failed assist in the same way they investigate safety incidents. **MA** hasn’t heard about this, doesn’t always trust that it’s fully investigated or whether it's just passed on to the manager. With SWR Michael says he can only hand on heart say the worst, bigger failed assist cases are fully investigated.

**Question about disinfectant? About it lasting a number of days? Is it killed on contact but also later?**

Yes, that is correct. Especially using it on buttons and hand rails. It can supposedly last up to 30 days and contains antiviral products.

**Current accessibility/ lift situation at Teddington**

MA: Isn’t entirely sure however he is aware that Network Rail are trying to purchase a small slither of land so that a lift can be installed. This installation has been made trickier as it’s a conservation area.

**5. Update from RATP**

**Matthew Howie** (Risk Manager) **& Malcolm Claridge** (Bus Priority Manager)

**Update on the buses**

* Services are back up and running at full service, par for some of the school buses that did have reduced service but now there is the summer holidays.
* Have upped their cleaning game with tighter schedules and taken extra provision with drivers having hand sanitisers, cleaning wipes and extra water supplies. Have also covered up any gaps more than 5mm in the front cab.
* Nationwide our cleaning contractors and they are using Vi Firewall Viricidal Cleaner and we have also used Gurdicide. They are also looking at Zoono Z-71 but this has only been discussions.
* Unfortunately lost a driver due to Covid-19 in April
* There is also extra support of a hardship fund as unfortunately quite a lot of staff have had to be furloughed.
* It’s hard to police the numbers of people on buses but there are regulations (18 single and 35 double decker capacity).
* There have been increased numbers of complaints but the drivers are being instructed to do certain things at the moment e.g. if capacity is reached, they will miss bus stops. There’s now a card at the front of the bus that can say full bus.
* Freedom pass cannot be used 4:30am-9am at present

**6. AOB**

* MH: Seeing so many electric scooters on the pavements especially in Twickenham and Richmond and they are very fast.
* MT: Private use of electric scooters are still not allowed to be used on the highway.
* AB: Thinks it's a police enforcement issue and it’s not up on the agenda but certainly thinks they are proliferating particularly on pavements and cycle lanes.
* AD: Offered condolences to Matthew and the team on losing a staff member.
* BM: Reminder that the **Co-Production Group meeting** at1:30-3pm on Microsoft Teams. They will be focusing on the Recovery Phase and what the Council, Social Services and CCG are planning, there will also be an update on Social Prescribing. If interested in joining this group/ future meeting contact Bruno Meekings (Community Involvement Manager Richmond CVS) on: BrunoM@richmondcvs.org.uk

**MC:** made a point about when cycle routes are implemented that it is important that the buses are still accessible.

**Alan thanks attendees and guest speakers**

**Meeting Minutes:** Amelia Maguire

**Next Mobility Forum Meeting: TBC**

**Contact for further information:**

RUILS

Tel: 020 8831 6083 E-mail: info@ruils.co.uk