

Public Transport Information Coordination Group

Notes of meeting

Held on 26 February 2015 at the offices of Department for Transport in London

Present :

Mark Cartwright (RTIG - Chair), Marcus Ambler (Thetis-its), Ian Barratt (ATCO), David Batchelor (Independent), Nicolas Brookes (EP Morris), James Bunting (CFBDP), Peter Cranny (NTA IE), Sarah Disborough (Silverail), Ian Gray (mdv), Matthew Griffin (DfT) James Hall (Atkins), Kieran Holmes (independent), David Houston (First), Miles Jackson (DfT), Mark Jones (EP Morris), Nick Knowles (Independent), Tom Lake (Interglossa), Helen Pattington (DfT), Steven Penn (TIL), Stuart Reynolds (DfT), Roger Slevin (independent), Peter Stoner (Ito), Mark Taylor (TWM), Richard Warwick (Arriva), Rob West (Omnibus Systems).

Speakers : Nic Cary (DfT), Laura Teale (DfT)

Apologies :

Chas Allen (Stagecoach), John Carr (independent), Paul Everson (Trapeze), Russell Gard (Nimbus), John Prince (Traveline), Roger Wilson-Hinde (screenreader.net).

Notes of last meeting on 9 October 2014

No issues were raised.

Matters arising from last meeting

RS reported that Jonathan Shewell-Cooper advised that NOC should hold Operator Licence numbers to make it easier to link NOC to other sets of related data.

PS noted that Ito had made changes to its NaPTAN system quicker than expected and they were thanked for achieving this.

MC reported that discussions had taken place with DfT concerning representation of DfT at BSI meetings and further discussions would take place.

It was noted that www.pti.org.uk is now live and available for document circulation for PTIC.

Government procurement processes

Nic Cary, Head of Digital and Open Data at DfT gave a presentation.

OJEU and Frameworks were noted as means of selling services to the public sector. Grants, and piggy-backing on intermediaries, are other possibilities. Digital Services Store (marketplace) has been introduced recently to enable rapid, low-cost procurement of services. It is replacing G-cloud and it is public sector wide, not just central government. There appear to be some issues about small organisations participating – but these issues have been recognised and are being resolved. Some individuals are now successfully selling their services through the Store. This is reducing the dependence that Government has put on the large systems integrators and reducing costs as a result, as well as providing greater opportunities for SMEs.

Procurement of services with a total life cost of under £100,000 is dealt with at the individual departmental unit in DfT. Above that value there is a Departmental oversight, and above £5m the Cabinet Office provides further oversight.

It is recognised that the public sector needs to catch up with the technologies that individuals are using in their homes – and that is requiring a significant transformation of the delivery mechanisms used by

Government.

TransXChange Publisher

HP advised that the upgrade to handle v2.5 files has still not been achieved – there have been three key obstacles. It is not off the agenda – but DfT are now thinking that a completely new "on line" publisher could be developed as open-source coding. This might be procured through the new Digital Store or it might be done "in house" as DfT is now developing an in-house capability. MT supported the focus on user needs that is to be adopted, including the naming of stops. NC commented that it is important to adhere to standards that have been established as they provide solid foundations for subsequent developments. PS added that the PTIC meeting should feel that we have an adequate basis in standards on which to build the new publisher and we do not need to review them at this stage. SR commented that standards are important but discussions within that framework should more strongly guide content to reduce complexity for those reading data from multiple sources – though DH was concerned not to constrain those writing TXC files unnecessarily.

NK welcomed open source developments. The publisher takes an XML document and parses it into an object that can be processed into various formats – and this is good for open source. Publisher also validates schema implementation – and any developments needs very extensive regression testing to avoid hidden errors in this process. He cautioned that an on-line publisher may suffer performance issues – particularly for those making extensive use of such a tool. DH welcomed the idea of the publisher going on-line, though within First they would expect their in-house systems to validate outputs without the use of the publisher.

HP thought that the earliest that development work would start (if in house) would be September – and probably later, unless there is a significant increase in the amount of data produced in v2.5. HP was asked to keep PTIC informed of progress.

European Standards

SIRI part 5 : MC asked if anyone was able to participate in this work related to Situation Exchange part of SIRI? One person had volunteered (Tom Lake) – but he noted that he would require someone to cover his direct expenses, as well as some technical advice from NK. It was noted that BSI might be able to provide some contribution towards expenses. TL would follow this up with MC, RS and NK.

Germans are proposing further work on exchanging driver schedules and rosters – detailed proposals not yet available.

Updating Transmodel : RS reported that work to draft the first three (of eight) parts of the updated standard had been completed and would be circulated for review soon (but had been delayed by France asking for more time to translate the drafts). An informative document containing the evolving data dictionary as the work progresses is now under way. It was hoped to secure funding for work on parts 4 – 8 from the European Commission.

DJPS (Distributed Journey Planning): RS reported that work on this Technical Specification was now progressing, albeit more slowly than had been hoped. The work takes on board the experiences of JourneyWeb, Delfi and EU-Spirit as well as the emerging work from France, and will be based on the recently developed TRIAS schema created by the Germans. Whilst UK has now moved from a distributed national system – and Germany expects to do the same – there remains a value in Distributed Journey Planning for all systems wanting to extend the geographical scope of their services through collaboration with neighbouring information systems.

NeTEx : NK reported that the fares section (part 3) is now out for comments. Final stages of work on White Papers and explanatory material are under way.

Part 4 has been proposed to cover a data model for rosters and scheduling (for which there has been no UK interest). There is also a proposal for a small model and standard for exchanging performance

data (between operators and authorities) which NK thinks will be a quite modest piece of work.

EBSF : MC reported that funding has been agreed by EC for EBSF2 – establishing technical frameworks for on-bus systems. CEN SG1 will take this forward and TfL will be involved in this to help them fast track their own work in this area.

The CEN draft standard "IP-based networking inside a vehicle" (part 7) had been made available and two copies had been requested by PTIC members – but there no comments had been received. Parts 7, 8 and 9 cover IP networking on buses – and these have been published for comments ahead of them being voted on.

Progress with v2.5 of Standards

Noted that the two-year embargo on making changes to v2.5 standards continues until December this year. The lack of coding to distinguish wheelchair-accessible buses in TNDS was noted – but it will be coming in the TXC 2.5 version. The 2.5 dataset is in use in TIL planner, but SP advised that further changes to the work involved in compiling TNDS will not be possible until the contract is re-negotiated for in a few months time.

RW noted that there is still no push from customers to implement 2.5 – there was a discussion about this, as recipient systems would only want to implement the features of 2.5 that are actually used and it may be helpful to everyone if a limited set of features could be agreed that both creators and recipients could implement in the first place.

Connecting journeys in TransXChange :

RS introduced the note he had written as a cover to the note from NK that described how connections can be coded in 2.5. An interim arrangement using an external file was accepted as a practical way forward for now – and discussions should take place between SR, Paul Everson, SP and any others with an interest in standardising the format for such a file. DB made a plea for the more human-readable format to be adopted, as currently suggested by SR.

PS noted recent advice that line names do not now need to be changed at the points where Registrations are split.

PTIC Issues

093 – Accommodating Isle of Man and Channel Islands in NaPTAN and NPTG : Isle of Man changes – DfT proposal is to produce a minor update to v2.5 to 2.5a to cover this. A new NaPTAN management system is being prepared for a new contract when the current contract expires in mid-2015 – and this would be the opportunity to implement v2.5a. The change is very minor and technical. No objections were raised to this proposal.

094 – Removal of "Exchanges" files from NaPTAN v1 : HP introduced this issue and sought comments on the proposal to remove these files. No adverse comments were raised.

Competition Commission consultation

Laura Teale from Buses & Taxis team at DfT gave a presentation about both the four proposals arising from the Competition Commission's review, and also the proposal for EBSR to become mandatory. EBSR is compliant with the "digital by default" ideal. There were 40 responses to the consultation – and most of these commented on the EBSR part. Most were supportive though there were some reservations – and some identified other opportunities that could arise from mandatory digital processes. Smaller operators were keen to re-use their existing electronic data (eg: if it is already held in spreadsheets, etc) wherever possible, and there were mixed views about traveline being engaged in the process of creating TXC.

DfT is going to progress the full roll-out of EBSR, but with some sort of self-service system for the smaller operators. They are also working to ensure good integration with DVSA.

The only CC recommendation that is being progressed is the addition of 14 days consultation ahead of Registration being submitted (in England and Wales – this is already in place in Scotland).

DH asked for assurances that DfT will consult CPT about making EBSR mandatory. PS asked whether the expectation is that electronic Registration will be 100%. DfT wants to make the system easy enough to use that it will be attractive for operators to use it. DH raised some concerns about going electronic but others suggested that going electronic should improve the speed of handling changes. PC noted that in Ireland they had used differential charges to encourage the use of electronic submission of their equivalent of bus service Registrations.

National Operator Code and School Term Dates

SP reported that the funding for this work had still not been received by TIL, and there was increasing concern that the deadline for completion in March 2015 is not going to be achievable.

Term Dates and Serviced Organisations – whilst the format of the data in DFES exists the necessary data is not apparently being maintained adequately. Money promised by Cabinet Office for work to improve the handling of school dates has also not yet been received by TIL, with the same concern that completion in March 2015 will not be achievable.

PTIC issue register

No new issues were raised. MC asked whether the moratorium on changes to standards should be extended for another year (beyond December 2015) – and suggested this be discussed at the next meeting.

Any other business

No other items were raised.

Next meeting

It was agreed that this should take place on Thursday 28 May 2015, between 1300 and 1600, at CPT in London.