



## **PTIC meeting 2nd March 2023**

You Tube video: <https://youtu.be/rCIXAapHydM>

Video timings for the start of each agenda item are provided below.

**Actions in red text**

**Opportunities to engage/test/feedback in green text**

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Notes and Actions from the 2 March 2023 meeting

[Next meeting 09 June 2023 1400-1600, Online](#)

PTIC website: <http://pti.org.uk/>



**Public Transport  
Information Coordination**

## **Attendees**

Hanaa Abdallah, DfT (NaPTAN)  
David Batchelor, Ticketer  
Mike Baxter, Leicester City Council  
David Booth, Mersey Travel  
Nic Cary, DEFT153  
Tony Davies, Trent Barton  
Morgan Evans, Ito world  
Josh Goodwin, bustimes.org  
Richard Hall, Ito World  
Teresa Jolley, DEFT153  
Andy Leon, Passenger  
Victor Leung, Ito World  
Harraj Mann, DfT (NaPTAN)  
Ben Murray, KPMG  
Mike Nolan, Traveline  
Triumph Okojie, DfT  
Tim Rivett, RTIG  
Dan Saunders, Basemap  
Patrick Smallman, Ito World  
Peter Stoner, Ito World  
Nick Truscott, Cornwall Council  
Rob West, Elydium

Apologies:

- Keith Sabin, Staffordshire County Council

## **1. Introduction**

## **2. Notes of last meeting 14 December 2022**

(at end)

## **3. Bus Open Data Digital Service (7:08 - 21:20)**

Triumph update:

[https://www.pti.org.uk/system/files/meeting\\_files/papers/20230302%20BODS%20Update.pdf](https://www.pti.org.uk/system/files/meeting_files/papers/20230302%20BODS%20Update.pdf)

[https://www.pti.org.uk/system/files/meeting\\_files/papers/BODS%20PTIC%20Update%20February%202023.pdf](https://www.pti.org.uk/system/files/meeting_files/papers/BODS%20PTIC%20Update%20February%202023.pdf)

Updates on:

**Publishing and compliance (see slide)**



**BODS monthly public beta enhancements (Jan and Feb):**

- Disruptions:
  - completed user flow / insight wireframes
  - user testing, data consumer and other insight sessions, finalising design
  - anticipate product to be ready for handover around June/July this year
- Ferries:
  - completed data discovery sessions for Ferries with LAs, agents and operators
- Flexible services:
  - exploring how to represent demand-responsive and flexible services in BODS
- Compliance and monitoring
  - time spent with bus operators to understand the data publishing journey for them, and becoming more aware of what data publishers need to deal with to make the data available to BODS.
  - would still like to ensure parity between fares and timetable data, but consideration required in terms of timing / extent in terms of compliance monitoring
  - have provided training sessions for various self-service aspects of the service
  - Looking at ways to improve the comms, as highlighted in last PTIC meeting and also from elsewhere
- Fares
  - release of simple fares validator into production
  - progressing with complex and discounted fares work

**Roadmap of activities Between Jan and May (see slide)**

**Complex fares regulation (see slide)**

Statutory deadline 7 Jan 2023. Not able to support that date, so we understand we can't enforce that date at the moment. Continue working with operators to support this. Not agreed on new date yet; will communicate that and keep comms channels open.

Between April - Jul, aim to publish guidance on complex fares, working with suppliers (getting them involved in process) so that it is achievable.

Aug/Sep: anticipate in position to test some complex fares validator features. Engage suppliers and operators in that process.

**Questions / Discussions**

Peter Stoner: wondering - reconsider the title 'Complex Fares'? Politically it is not the right message, as it implies it is too difficult to embark on.

Triumph: make sense. Happy to look at alternatives. **Action for Triumph to take away and discuss change of title from Complex Fares (see above) with colleagues.**



### **3.1. Routes & Timetables (21:20 - 37:40)**

#### **Flexible Services exercise by Tim**

Tim: BODS for planned information (timetables) currently only supports fixed route and fixed timetable services. There are an increasing number of services that don't have a fixed route or timetable. Legal definitions around flexible services, but doesn't cover the whole gamut of operations that people might want to have in a Journey Planner.

Work that I'm doing to see what technically needs to happen in standards and formats to enable flexible services to be supplied to BODS.

Work done in 2021 by KPMG (Discovery) that identified some of the challenges and issues. I'm working through this picking it back up. Some people have had emails from me asking for examples and data. Process ongoing.

**Will take a few weeks to understand how to model as many types of flexible services as possible, so plenty of time to get involved if you think you have something to add.**

**Action (all): get in touch with Tim Rivett on [tim@timrivett.co.uk](mailto:tim@timrivett.co.uk), to set up a call**

#### **Set-down on request challenge**

David Batchelor: got examples where services run to certain points or whole journeys on request only. If we put it in as serving every point and setting down, the compliance mechanisms try and measure it at all those points. If you don't include all the points, you don't get the journey planning capabilities.

Because BODS won't do the traditional way, where in the notes it says set-down only, we need to reconcile this before getting onto totally flexible services.

Tim: data consumers - do you have ways of handling these type of stops and service challenge?

Mike Baxter: David's situation describing- where a service will be along route if someone wants to go all the way rather than part of the way?

Tim: yes also diversions into a village on request. Probably quite a lot of variants.

Mike: so its coping with a commented description for a route?

Tim: David wants it to be dealt with it automatically rather than in comments

David: BODS won't take comments. Also if we can achieve it programmatically, we don't have to describe it to lots of people in lots of different ways. Can't use it for compliance. Sometimes can



use it for Journey Planning when it's a possibility, but sometimes it's only a possibility when you are on the bus.

Peter Stoner: previous conference in 1990s - useful categorisation on different options. I've held the strategic hope that at sometime the booking systems will link with the real time systems. Did discuss it with Mobisoft? (running some of DRT booking systems?). Potential for getting it. Tend to be between quick fixes and grappling with the real solution that is required; everyone has to come around to quite sophisticated integration which might be a step too far, but need to focus more on this than quick fixes.

There are always two possibilities in terms of booking as to where/whether a service continues to a particular stop. 1) Someone on the bus telling the driver, or 2) someone not yet on the bus but requesting a stop. Driver should be able to have a way to turn an on-bus ask as a booking, so it can be included into the predictions to show adjustments to the service. Can then update all downstream systems, and categorise diversion in 2 ways:

- diversion becomes a fixed route (and can add new bookings on the updated route)
- discounting all the other possibilities no you have committed to one option. This is RT information, an adjustment to schedule.

Nick Truscott: issue of set down only for one service. In bustimes.org, using BODS data, correctly appending time to setdown only stops with an S, except for the last stop, bizarrely. Wonder if that is due to original data (in this case Traveline Southwest are the agent for this operator), or whether it is BODS that is making changes to the data in some way?

Tim: every last stop should be set-down only.

Nick: in TXC, stop action is always set down too.

Josh: assumed every last stop is set down only, I've chosen not to set it for the last stop.

David B: where are you getting set down from? From the notes, or that it says setdown?

Josh: something in the TXC, more formal than a note.

David B: you can do set down, but you wouldn't know if it was set down on request. So someone trying to do it right, is taking the data and still possibly not getting it quite right.

Rob West: strikes me that all set down only stops would be on request. Is there any situation where you would flag in the TXC timetable that it is setdown only, but that would not be on request? Or would we assume via compliance side of things, that if we have a setdown only flag on a stop, then we apply rules for on request?



Tim: that may be a clever solution! Technical every stop is s set down or pick up on request

Peter: partly to do with whether vehicle is just passing the stop, or just diverting. In RTI prediction terms, how much distance is being covered and what are the intermediate times. Needs a bit more than just set down, it is about the request, and whether a diversion is being carried out or not.

### **3.2. Location Data**

No updates

### **3.3. Feedback from Bank Holiday workshop (37:40 - 38:50)**

Tim: Following on from special session in January looking at BH's and having a think still about feedback from that. Aim to improve guidance on this as we think through it. Welsh Assembly are working on their version of BODS and thinking of similar things. Cross-conversations going on about cross-border services etc. Scotland needs to get involved in that too - challenge is Scottish Bank Holidays.

### **3.4. Fares**

Stephen Penn (KPMG) not on the call, but Triumph has given us an update.

## **4. NaPTAN updates (added) (39:25 - 50:18)**

Introduction to new Product owners Harraj and Hanaa

Working on back-end improvements to the system. Also working on front end and multi-upload

Also in wider talks about other pressing policy issues - closed bus stops.

We want to engage with PTIC and others in the ecosystem - emails in the chat. Getting focus groups and one-to-ones up and running.

### **Questions / Discussion**

Dan Saunders: was there a report being done on Future of NaPTAN?

Harraj: ready to be published, thinking it might be released at end of March ([published28th March 2023](#))

Dan: seems to be going round in circles a bit on it last year or so. As a user of NaPTAN every day, keen to know what the roadmap is, and more action and less talk.

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Harraj: hopefully me and Hanna can provide this. First is for us to understand the ecosystem, and then focus on what really needs to be improved. Also for us to absorb what has been covered in public meetings, and to hold another in future.

Keith Willis: Sarah was going to upload the webinar and DfT YouTube account has vanished...

Harraj: in touch with YouTube, channel has disappeared. Working to get it restored, and get the video uploaded. <https://youtu.be/CKJZZDNrZZo>

Mike Baxter: has there been a change of organisational structure for NaPTAN?

Harraj: Sarah has moved on to another project. Was previously Adrian. Now Harraj and Hanaa, for now.

Dan Saunders: are you with DfT, or contracted?

Harraj: I'm with DfT but from Cabinet Office. Hanaa is a contractor from ThoughtWorks.

Dan Saunders: previous meetings, we had a demo of new NapTAN viewer tool = download a GitHub thing...any updates on that tool? Talk of DfT hosting it? Local Authorities struggling to download GitHub.

Mike Baxter: agree - we do need it!

Harraj: that was with Sarah and Tom. **Action for Harraj to get an update, and look into locally hosting it etc.**

Tim: it worked when you downloaded it, but pretty much any organisation with IT controls does not like end users downloading stuff from GitHub.

Mike: are the instructions for doing this still in existence?

Tim/Harraj: yep. Link to GitHub site: [https://github.com/department-for-transport-public/Open\\_NaPTAN](https://github.com/department-for-transport-public/Open_NaPTAN)

Keith: when NaPTAN project was being redone, and discussion on the mapper tool - lot of talk about what rules were. DfT might release what business / user rules are, but don't think that came to fruition? Will this be picked up and shared?

**Action for Harraj: will go and find out**

- [Harraj.mann@dft.gov.uk](mailto:Harraj.mann@dft.gov.uk) &



- [hanaa.abdallah@dft.gov.uk](mailto:hanaa.abdallah@dft.gov.uk)

Peter: In the past, this group has worked through codes for Isle of Man / Channel Islands etc, and getting them in the standards. data available for some time, but never appears in NaPTAN portal. Keen that this is included/progressed.

Keith: Likewise Jersey / Channel Islands

**Action for Hanaa: will follow up**

**Action for Keith: to forward emails on this to Harraj and Hanaa**

#### **4. Journey Planner Performance (50:18 - 1:06:55)**

A year or so ago, we had conversations about Journey Planner quality of results etc. Went into bit of abeyance whilst conversations continued. John Carr leading that, and shared an update:

John makes journey to football match - struggled to plan journey across London and into Herts - identified various challenges and ways to be solved ([link to notes for this](#)).

ATCO discussions (responsible transport people in authorities) have identified issues and challenges with Journey Planners, including:

- strikes
- unforeseen disruptions with timetables not reflecting this
- cancellations (industry-wide problem for a year or so, driver shortages etc) affects both journey planners and RTI systems
- inconsistencies of responses from different journey planners - confusing. Some journey planners miss services that should be there.
- work done around 2000s just as Traveline set up, to look at what a good journey planner would/should provide...
- consensus that need to do something similar - come up with set of benchmarks to help identify what produces good journey planners and what doesn't
- missing things:
  - What does a normal user and uneducated transport user - need and want - what are their expectations and requirements? Most of the conversations are with people who understand the technology and can work through / around different things knowledgeably.
  - Proposal by ATCO they convene a group, including Transport Focus to put a day workshop on to address this. What users might need - benchmark questions and challenges for assessing journey planning value. Qu: should / do PTIC want to be involved in that? If yes - then we will help co-ordinate...



### **Discussion / Questions**

Dan Saunders: We've just done some work on a new algorithm for our software, and benchmarked it against Google Maps, Traveline etc. Amazing variation in results. Few ways we worked out what/how to benchmark and where the variabilities in results were coming from:

- quality of the source data
- algorithm assumptions - very deterministic, requires a lot of iterations, and they make assumptions that aren't always correct
- Think John's goal of identifying what a Journey Planner should do is an idea of merit
- Issue I see would be how would you change Google / commercial providers? Google came across bad in our testing. Traveline came out better. How do you get that view across to consumers. And how do you encourage buy-in of suppliers to change their products?
- Think there is a role for PTIC to have in this.

Nick Truscott: lot of it does come back to data going in at the start. If operator data is poor quality, outputs from any journey planner will be poor quality. Given operators are now having to produce their schedule data in quite a few different formats to fit different things that require the data, the room for data slip has increased. Take Cornwall, where operators are producing data for BODS, their own website, and Real Time systems. Work this week on mileage data for services has shown me first-hand that the room for data to slip has expanded in this space. Minor changes might be on operator website, but might not have been updated in the feed to Traveline, which is in turn picked up by Josh's website, or the data fed to the Real Time system. Almost a fulltime job for someone in an operator to manage this now.

Dan Saunders: in London, journey planner assumptions sometimes do not include any interchange time to get from underground to overground, and therefore impossible to make that journey.

Inferred data standards would be useful to state allowances of time to change between modes etc.

Nick Truscott: I never use Google to plan a journey. Never of complaints we get from people who have wrong data from Google.

Peter: in discussion, we need to be careful about making generalisations. The point is to bring in the many dimensions of what a good journey planner could be. Google strength might be its reach / penetration across public transport for example.

Also bear in mind, one of the big differences, it uses its own gazetteer. Need to check if you have preconceived ideas / assumptions from the industry as to how to pose questions or test the assumptions we have. Try to avoid joining the bandwagon as a more learned group.

Tim: agree, and perhaps your and others involvement who understand how data is best provided to some of these suppliers, to make sure they understand properly and make best use of it, will be part of a good outcome.



Peter: happy to do that

Mike Baxter: issue of where data comes from for whichever journey planner you are using. I come across operators (smaller ones) - complaint that they have to supply to many different end-points (BODS, real-time system, Ticket machine etc). Whole host of things that operators need to do that are resource-hungry. Where do the various journey planners get their data from?

Is BODS going to be the holy grail etc. Obvious thing to say.

Tim: understanding the data flow, and lags potentially, will be important. Traveline have done work on this in the past which helps to work out problems with plans that were being put forward etc.

**Action for Tim:** do I take it from those comments, that as PTIC this is something we want to be involved with? In which case will carry on conversations with ATCO. and have a session to look at that.

### **Traveline 1:06:55 - 1:07:51)**

Mike: Board meeting in a next few weeks, so Julie will provide an update after that.

## **5. Feedback from OS Mapping session (1:07:51 - 1:13:00)**

Tim update on this (history: Ordnance Survey presentation at the last meeting. and follow-up meeting to explore this with them in January)

Actions from that January meeting that Ordnance Survey (OS) are taking to how better model and represent data.

Sarah Al-Adley was talking to them about that, in reference to use of NaPTAN in the products to help help with matching up data etc.

Actions:

- OS licensing: and how non-public sector bodies might be able to use it, because the mapping products they were talking about are available through public sector licensing agreement (PSGA), and available to people providing services under contract to the public sector. Slightly less clear how that might be available to providers who don't have a direct contract with an authority - such as app providers and operators, who often struggle to get high quality mapping.
- Tim continued discussions around these license issues and implications. Hoping in April, we have some sessions with operators and app providers (commercial system providers)



to understand more about the way that they operate and the split between public/private operations - aim is to make OS data more available to transport industry more broadly.

- Mapping raster layer, also routing algorithms etc
- discussion happening between lawyers etc in OS on this at the moment

### **Discussion/Questions**

none

## **6. European Standards development (1:13:00 - 1:18:35)**

Tim: After a few years of work / updates to standards like SIRI and NeTEx, things are now quieter. Waiting for formal votes etc, and are currently in quiet phase.

Work going on with Transmodel (overall architecture which SIRI and NeTEx fit under), to make sure it reflects what is going on in lower tiers of standards.

Updates to NeTEx about the planning side of things, such as seating plans on-vehicle, so you can move booking data around between systems more easily. Deck plans for ferries and multi-level trains

Work starting next year to help NeTEx handle driver duties, and scheduling of these. Might be interesting for PTIC.

### **Questions / discussion**

John Carr question for DfT. DfT talking ownership of standard development. **Action for Tim to email DfT about it.**

TJ: bonfire of UK regs end of 2023?

Tim: some are looking at this in DfT and in CPT. Involves drivers working hours etc.

## **7. What should PTIC be doing that it is not? (1:18:35 - 1:22:18)**

Tim: aware that a lot of PTIC topics is focused on DfT topics. Means we might be a bit reactive.

Some work last year on 15-min neighbourhoods. Should we be doing some different things - floor for discussion...

- What should we be doing we're not doing
- What do we need to stop doing

### **Question / discussion**

Dan Saunders: I find PTIC very useful for getting updates on major projects like DfT, BODS, NaPTAN, Traveline projects etc



Could that be expanded further - different modes of transport we could add? ATCO and RDG gave some updates, which were useful but then fell away.

Anything else in the remit of us, to help us keep abreast of what is happening...

**Action / encouragement (all): do drop us a line of what we would like to do more of**

## **8. Issue Log (1:22:18 - 1:22:44)**

Nothing new. Live issue is handling of Bank Holidays handling in BODS Data Profile

## **9. Next Meeting (1:22:44 - 1:23:30)**

Already booked in year in advance, check website for details. Next is 9th June 2023 online.

## **10 AOB (1:23:30 - end)**

Rob West: asked by operator earlier, is there a standard name for the forthcoming Coronation Bank Holiday? Should we all be using it?

Tim: good question. Not at the moment. Tim is putting together a note tomorrow for precisely this.

Nick: Bank Holiday discussion; does this pick up the Christmas Eve and New Years Eve run-offs?

Tim: yes, and it is one of the most challenging for operators to handle at the moment

Nick: surely it can be as simple as those journeys which are not operating on those days, coded as an exception, rather creating a whole new set of data?

Tim: that is one of the ways discussed in how to do it

Nick: I have been manually adjusting the file like this for the past few years.

Tim: Several ABOD sessions with Ito World over the next few weeks into April. Sign up through the PTIC website.

Mike: are they all open to anyone? Can I go to an operator one?

Tim: yes.

Rob West: ABODS - earlier presentations - there was a restriction on agents being permitted to use ABODS, targeted to operators. Has that changed? Are agents now being considered for using ABODS?

Tim: Operators and Agents - because it's about data quality. In terms of access to ABODS for an Agent.

Patrick: it is on a situational basis. If your operators are happy to have access for you to that data, they can invite you in. If a unique organisation needs to be added, then we'll need an agreement with all the operators you want to come in with.