

Date: 30 January 2017

Item: Social Needs Transport

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to brief the Panel on current transport provision for elderly and/or mobility impaired Londoners; TfL's plans for improving social needs transport and to provide an update on progress in delivering these plans.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note TfL's plans to improve social needs transport services in London and consider appointing a Social Needs Transport Champion from among its members, who will conduct an investigation into how the relevant services can be improved.**

3 Services

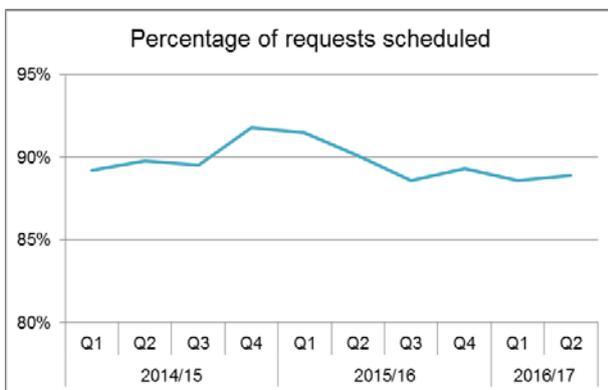
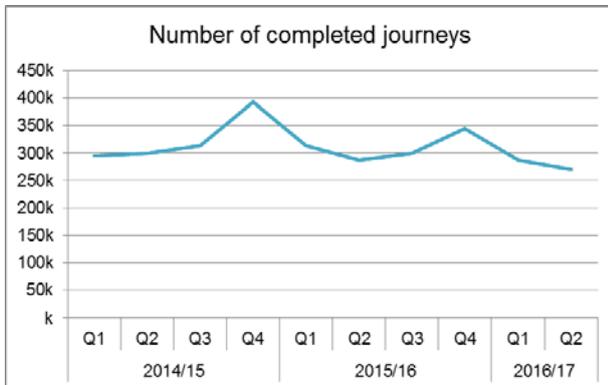
- 3.1 Provision of social needs transport is a complex area with a number of operators providing different services across London:
- (a) The TfL Dial-a-Ride service provides a door-to-door multi-occupancy London wide bus service that is free to users;
 - (b) Taxicard is an on demand, guaranteed, subsidised kerb-to-kerb taxi service for mobility impaired Londoners paid for by TfL and London boroughs. This is complemented by the smaller Capital Call Service in ten boroughs;
 - (c) TfL also provides a travel mentoring service to encourage disabled people to make use of mainstream transport services;
 - (d) a number of independent, borough based, Community Transport (CT) operators provide transport, usually for group travel. These are not for profit charities, and any surpluses they make are reinvested in the communities they serve; and
 - (e) statutory transport comprises local authority social care and special educational needs transport services, and NHS non-emergency Patient Transport Services.

The table overleaf shows the key features of these services.

Service	Operator	Cost and Funding	Membership and Usage
Dial-a-Ride	TfL in-house operation supplemented by taxi, private hire and multi-occupancy accessible transport provision (currently provided by CTs).	£35m in 2015/16 100% funded by TfL	47,000 members 1.25 million passenger journeys per year Free to use No journey limit 90% of journey requests accommodated
Taxicard	Operates across all London boroughs. Booking, scheduling and dispatch operated by London Councils on behalf of TfL and the boroughs. Travel services provided by a taxi consolidator service (CityFleet).	£11.1m in 2015/16 86% funded by TfL (£9.5m) 14% funded by boroughs (£1.6m) TfL's funding contribution has increased from 38% in 2002/03 to 86% in 2015/16	73,500 members 1.2 million trips per year Subsidised cost Journey limits apply On demand, guaranteed service
Capital Call	Operates across 10 London boroughs. Membership and booking, scheduling and dispatch operated by Hackney CT. Travel services provided by local private hire companies.	£374k in 2015/16 100% funded by TfL	2,000 members 23,000 trips per year Subsidised cost Journey limits apply On demand, guaranteed service
Travel Mentoring	TfL in partnership with local authorities, disability organisations, and health and social care professionals.	£300k in 2014/15 100% funded by TfL	12,000 accompanied journeys 87 multi-occupancy bus days for 2,900 people
Community Transport	22 independent operators covering 29 boroughs.	In 2014/15 290 full time staff 320 part time staff Overall costs not aggregated	In 2014/15 1.8 million trips per year

4 Dial-a-Ride Operational Performance

4.1 The charts below show the key Dial-a-Ride operational performance measures.



4.2 Customer Satisfaction remains very high and although the Dial-a-Ride complaint rate appears high compared to other modes, this is, in part due to the personalised, door-to-door nature of the service and reflects the fact that Dial-a-Ride is the only transport option for many of its customers.

4.3 Journey refusals (where customers are unable to get the very specific booking that they want) are the biggest single source of complaints. The recent reduction in complaints, particularly journey refusals, is a result of improvements in front line staff call handling within Dial-a-Ride. Improvements include providing customers with advice about increasing their chances of a successful booking by being more flexible about the time that they travel.

5 Social Needs Transport Review

- 5.1 In 2015, TfL commissioned an independent review of Social Needs Transport. The review encompassed the views of a wide variety of stakeholder and community groups and recommended that the disparate and uncoordinated social needs services should, over time, be brought together to secure passenger benefits and operational efficiencies.
- 5.2 The London Assembly Transport Committee has also conducted a review of Door to Door services in London. Its findings were published in January 2015 and made a number of recommendations that include greater coordination across the different service providers.
- 5.3 TfL responded in March 2015 setting out a vision for the development of social needs transport in London, seeking to integrate the currently disparate provision, remove barriers to access and improve the quality and capacity of transport services provided. This vision, together with a roadmap for delivery is set out in full in the Social Needs Transport Review document and is summarised below.
- 5.4 While the need for greater integration and coordination of the provision of social needs transport services is unarguable, it is recognised that the achievement of the vision of a truly integrated 'world class' social needs transport service for London will not be straightforward. Because of the multiplicity of existing service providers, it will be incumbent upon TfL, the Boroughs and the community transport sector to work together to maximise passenger benefit and secure economic efficiencies from integration, to enable expansion of service provision within an inevitably constrained funding environment.
- 5.5 The number of people in London eligible for these services is growing as the number of Londoners with reduced mobility is set to rise. It is predicted that by 2018 there could be nearly 40,000 more people with reduced mobility, and by 2031 there could be a further 150,000. This would bring the total of Londoners with reduced mobility to more than one million.
- 5.6 Even without this increase in demand, there is already a pressure on spend:
 - (a) boroughs are reducing their spend on Social Needs Transport; this is having a detrimental impact, declining financial support for Taxicard and a decline in the consistency of the Taxicard service offer across London; and
 - (b) TfL now provides the vast majority of funding for non-statutory door to door schemes in London, contributing £45m towards the overall costs of £46.5m for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call.

This places additional pressure on the existing service, but also offers a real opportunity for change.

Proposals

- 5.7 Across the services, there is a complex mix of service commission and service delivery. This includes multiple commissioners and a large and diverse group of providers under various contracts without common standards.
- 5.8 Bringing these together is a challenging undertaking. Integration can help ensure better services for users and make services more efficient by reducing duplication.
- 5.9 Complex service provision will make integration challenging. It is for this reason that the proposals here are set out in incremental manageable steps. With each step we aim to capitalise on further synergies across different service providers. The proposals focus on two key elements, improvements in the customer contact experience and the delivery of transport services.

Customer Contact Experience

- 5.10 **Short term:** Following joint tendering, move to a single customer complaints and feedback process, a single set of eligibility criteria and a single membership process for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and, where applicable, the TfL Travel Mentoring service. This will result in a service that is much simpler for customers to use and understand and one that is cheaper to administer.
- 5.11 **Medium term:** Work to introduce a single booking process for customers. Initially this could mean a single phone number, with calls connected through to the relevant call centre. The fundamental step will be to move to an integrated booking centre providing an integrated service for users of Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and Travel Mentoring, providing a single booking point for all services.
- 5.12 Following these steps, trials of a local, decentralised booking process (as requested by a number of stakeholders, who believe this would lead to more effective booking and scheduling and a more personalised customer service) could take place.
- 5.13 **Long term:** Seek to expand the role of the integrated operation to secure more cooperation and coordination with other providers across London, with the aim of commissioning provision from the most appropriate and cost-effective providers.

Transport Services

- 5.14 **Short Term:** TfL will re-let its current contractual arrangements for Dial-a-Ride's Multi-Occupancy Accessible Transport (MOAT) contracts, currently in place with six community transport providers, in a form that would incentivise contractors to invest in the vehicles, drivers and training. This will provide ongoing support for the community transport sector.
- 5.15 TfL hopes to diversify the use of the Dial-a-Ride fleet, contracting out to other service providers who also have a need for the fleet's specialist vehicles and trained drivers. This would improve the overall efficiency of the fleet and start to integrate the services TfL provides with those in the education and health sectors.

- 5.16 **Medium Term:** The taxi and private hire industry already provides significant transport services to both Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard. In partnership with London Councils and boroughs, TfL will develop a new contracting framework, letting a series of contracts to meet the requirements on the service. The new contracts will include enhanced standards of customer service including enhanced training requirements.

6 Progress

- 6.1 Since producing the Social Needs Transport Roadmap, TfL has been working with London Councils to progress integration and joint commissioning of door-to-door transport, specifically across Taxicard and Dial-a-Ride.
- 6.2 TfL has made progress with other proposals outlined in the Roadmap by taking the following steps internally:
- (a) separating the Dial-a-Ride operation into two distinct parts – Assisted Transport Services and Fleet Services. This provides a clear distinction between the commissioning and delivery of Dial-a-Ride services;
 - (b) reviewing, expanding and re-procuring its MOAT contract to provide Dial-a-Ride services. The new MOAT contract will provide operators with greater contractual and financial security and, by ensuring social value is a key component of the assessment criteria, thereby help to strengthen the provision of transport services across London. The procurement is on track;
 - (c) implementing a review of the five mile trip focus criteria in line with recommendations from the London Assembly and feedback from users – this review will need to balance the desire for longer journeys with the demand for more frequent access to trips; and
 - (d) outline agreement with London Councils to jointly re-procure the Taxicard and taxi Dial-a-Ride services to deliver efficiency savings that could be used to reinvest in service provision and deliver a reduction in operating costs, and therefore, funding requirements for TfL and boroughs.

7 Social Needs Transport Champion and Investigation

- 7.1 The Panel could consider appointing a Social Needs Transport Champion, who would assume responsibility for overseeing future changes to the services outlined above on behalf of the Panel and the Board.
- 7.2 The Social Needs Transport Champion could be asked to conduct a one-off investigation into social needs transport provision, which may include engaging with stakeholder groups, external partners (including London Councils) and TfL officers to determine how services could be further improved in both the short and longer term.

7.3 The scope of the investigation would be determined by the Champion and the wider Panel, but it could include examining:

- (a) user feedback on existing services, the identification of any recurring problems and the proposal of appropriate solutions;
- (b) how satisfaction levels could be increased beyond those already reported;
- (c) how TfL can move towards the provision of more integrated services more rapidly;
- (d) how both existing services and future, integrated services can be delivered through a more user-friendly interface;
- (e) how social needs transport services can be used to better serve health facilities; and
- (f) the role of external partners in delivering better services.

7.4 The timescale and resources required for the investigation and any wider terms of reference could be determined by the Panel.

List of appendices to this report:

None

List of Background Papers:

Social Needs Transport Review Document

Contact Officer: Peter Blake, Director of Service Operations, Surface Transport
Number: 020 3054 8089
Email: PeterBlake@tfl.gov.uk