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**Secretariat memorandum**

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LTW490

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Social needs transport

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To brief members on London TravelWatch's work on social needs transport and consider appropriate services for the future.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1. That members note the report.

**3 Social needs transport**

- 3.1. Social needs transport in London is currently provided by several operators, including Transport for London's Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, council social and education transport and the NHS patient transfer service. It exists to provide door-to-door transport services to people who find it hard to access mainstream transport services through disability or illness.
- 3.2. London TravelWatch has previously reviewed individual aspects of social needs transport and has expressed concerns about the fragmented nature of provision.
- 3.3. In 2010, London TravelWatch considered a report on transport for mobility impaired residents in the Greater London area that looked at Dial-a-Ride and its performance as well as a report by London Councils that examined services including Taxicard, Capital Call, Patient Transport, children's SEN transport and community transport including PlusBus. The following year London TravelWatch considered the outcome of London Councils' report and called for service providers to take account of the needs of people with reduced mobility and the places they may need frequent transport to, such as hospitals and day centres. In 2013, London TravelWatch invited the director of Dial-a-Ride, Paul Blackwell, to attend its Policy committee to discuss some of the problems facing Dial-a-Ride users.
- 3.4. In addition to the formal meetings, London TravelWatch officers and members have regularly discussed the need for improvement rationalisation of door-to-door transport services with senior officers at Transport for London and other bodies and have contributed to several consultations and scrutinies on the subject.
- 3.5. London TravelWatch has consistently expressed concern about the Dial-a-Ride booking process and the utilisation of vehicles – we see the challenge as delivering more journeys with the same resources.

- 3.6. We also want to see a single special needs passenger service delivered to what is generally the same clientele, though we recognise the complexity of this in institutional arrangements.
- 3.7. TfL have commissioned consultants to look into this. We have met with the consultants. However, their report is not published and TfL have not finalised their considerations of this. If the outcome of the review recommends significant structural changes to the provision of door-to-door services this will clearly lead to sensitivity among both passengers and staff.

#### **4 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 4.1. The provision of social needs transport enables individuals with mobility impairments or illnesses to travel and access other social and health services.

#### **5 Legal powers**

- 5.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to consider, and where it appears to it to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to any service or facility provided by or for (or in the case of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, licensed by) Transport for London, other than a matter relating to the transportation of freight, if it has been the subject of representations made by or on behalf of users of that service or facility. Section 252B of the same Act places a similar duty on the Committee in respect of users or potential users of railway services provided wholly or partly within the “London railway area” as defined under the provisions of the Railways Act 1993.

#### **6 Financial implications**

- 6.1. No implications of this nature arise directly from this report.