
Secretariat memorandum

Author: Vincent Stops

Agenda item: 11

LTW579

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Social needs transport

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To update members on social needs transport.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. That members note the report and discuss future actions.

3 Background

- 3.1. At its Board meeting on 27 January 2015 members heard from TfL and users of Dial-A-Ride and discussed social needs transport in general.
- 3.2. Members were told of a consultation that had been undertaken on behalf of TfL, but at the time of the meeting had not been published. There was no indication of any outcomes.
- 3.3. At the meeting, we heard that there had been no decision made as to the future of Capital Call, a substitute service for Taxicard in areas with limited taxi availability. Subsequently Capital Call has been closed to new members.
- 3.4. London TravelWatch has long recognised the value of social needs transport and the value users place on it to give them access to friends, family and services. However, there is frustration amongst Board members at the difficulties passengers have booking ad-hoc journeys. From observation, there is also a perception amongst Board members that the service is not as efficiently operated as it might be – from observation, often mini-buses are carrying a single user. An improvement in occupancy could deliver more much needed journeys.
- 3.5. London TravelWatch also wants to see TfL, London government and the NHS do more to provide a single social needs transport service to clients and thereby better utilise the various fleets of Dial-a-Ride, hospital transport, social services transport and so on, though it is recognised that this would be a challenging project.
- 3.6. TfL have continued to reduce their ‘mobility’ services (routes numbered 9xx), of which there were 12 in 2007 but now only two (965 and 969) following the demise of the 931 in May 2017. These changes combined with a reduction in local authority community transport services and a growing older population means that there is rising demand for social needs transport.

- 3.7. Members should note that the nature of the clientele is such that TfL are very careful as to how they introduce changes.

4 Update

- 4.1. Since members discussed this last, there have been a number of developments, although for the reasons mentioned above they have been slow and incremental. A further complication is that TfL are trying to establish a unique and ambitious new service working in partnership with both public bodies, the community sector and possibly the private sector.
- 4.2. Following the review of social needs transport TfL has produced a 'Road Map'. Progress on this 'Road Map' was presented to a TfL sub-committee in November 2017. Members should note the service is now described as 'Assisted Transport Services' (ATS). The key elements are set out below:
- **Action 1. Conduct data analysis and customer engagement** to understand customer choice between ATS and mainstream services;
 - **Action 2.** Develop a **new umbrella identity for ATS** to build joint identity across the existing delivery partnerships;
 - **Action 3.** Develop a **one stop shop single platform to access core ATS services**, initially hosted on the TfL website, and building on the potential for greater integration between Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard booking and dispatch centres arising from closer working to set up and monitor the new joint taxi and phv framework contract;
 - **Action 4. Increase awareness of full range of transport options** through integrated customer information about ATS alongside accessible public transport options. Include signposts to MTS public transport accessibility improvements as they come on line;
 - **Action 5. Expand marketing of ATS services**, including Travel Mentoring and mobility scooter use on buses (Mobility Aid Recognition Scheme) to Freedom Pass and Blue Badge Holders
 - **Action 6.** Conduct a pilot in two London Boroughs as a step towards developing a **single, integrated payment platform** for ATS;
 - **Action 7.** Research opportunities to harness **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** innovations, with a view to conducting trials of using DRT to contribute to core ATS;
 - **Action 8. Engagement with other service providers**, such as the NHS and community transport operators, to potentially widen the breadth of the transport offer, working towards a pilot to integrated emergency patient transport into a single payment platform in a borough;
 - **Action 9.** Expand the **one stop shop integrated platform for ATS** including public transport options and invite partnerships with the NHS and the third sector at a local level, building to London wide coverage over time.
- 4.3. TfL have also undertaken to procure Dial-a-Ride services from the community sector in order to foster innovation and utilise local knowledge. Non-TfL providers now deliver 20% of the service.
- 4.4. Recently the press reported that Taxicard funding from the Mayor was to be reduced, but it has been subsequently reported that this will not now happen.

- 4.5. We report the quarterly performance of Dial-a-Ride in our TfL performance report. There are consistently high satisfaction levels for the driver and service, but great dissatisfaction with the booking of ad-hoc journeys. This is reflected in a high level of complaints when prospective clients are refused a journey.
- 4.6. In April 2017, the London Assembly Transport investigated Door-to-Door transport in London. They were critical of the progress being made on TfL's 'Road Map' and asked for six monthly reports on progress. They also recommended the exploration of the use of personal budgets to be applied to the assisted Transport service.

5 Discussion

- 5.1. TfL are planning a very ambitious change to the assisted transport services in London that accords very closely to London TravelWatch's aspiration for a single service. However, there is much to be done and it will probably be very slow going.
- 5.2. Members may wish to invite TfL to address them at a subsequent Board meeting (probably post publication of the Mayor's Transport Strategy). Alternatively, they could monitor the London Assembly's and the TfL board's oversight of progress.

6 Equalities and inclusion implications

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

7 Legal powers

- 7.1. 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.

8 Financial implications

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