
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 9

PC008

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Dial-a-Ride

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide members with a briefing on Dial-a-Ride services in London.

2 Introduction

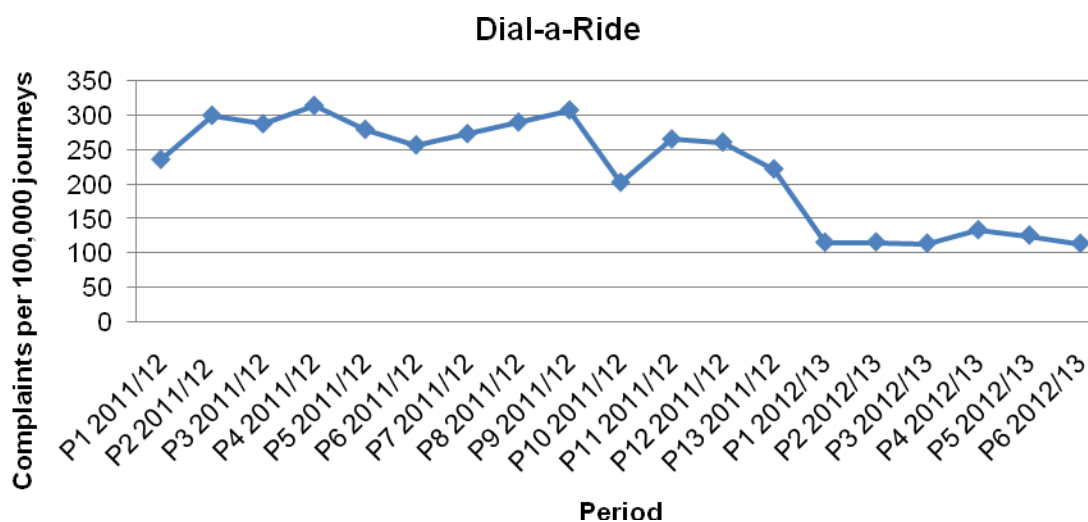
- 2.1 There are various door to door transport services provided in London for those unable to use mainstream public transport due to age or disability. The health service provides a service for trips to hospital, local councils provide trips to their social service centres and there are free standing community transport providers in the charitable or third sector. Dial-a-Ride is a free London-wide service that caters for non-health service trips.

3 Recent history and performance

- 3.1 In 2007 TfL produced a revised door to door strategy. It reorganised what was an area-wide service into a London-wide service. It became a free service with a membership requirement. There was to be a programme of investment in purpose built vehicles. The most problematic change was to centralise the booking system and introduce a new computer system. This did not go well.
- 3.2 It took some time to resolve the computer and booking issues, but by 2010 TfL were reporting improved performance.
- 3.3 In 2011 the membership requirements, for new members, were altered to move towards a more rigorous assessment of need.
- 3.4 The performance of Dial-a-Ride is measured by the number of journeys delivered, i.e. a target of 1.4 million journeys. This target has been met in recent years. There are also customer satisfaction surveys which generally show a good level of satisfaction overall if slightly below target. However, this hides the issue that mostly concerns members which is the booking system and getting an ad-hoc journey booked. The booking system scores about 75 which is much lower than the journey score at 95.
- 3.4 While regular journeys are easily booked by members those wanting an ad-hoc trip are dealt with on a first-come-first-served basis and so there is much competition to book a trip on Monday morning at 9am. This means that despite a large number of call handlers it is difficult to get through on the

phone during busy times and it is difficult to book the journey requested. This is clearly frustrating.

- 3.5 This frustration at not being able to book a journey results in high levels of complaints to TfL, but these are generally handled sensitively by Dial-a-Ride and so do not appear often as appeals to London TravelWatch. The graph below shows the number of Dial-a-Ride complaints to TfL, which is on a downward trend since April 2011, but still much higher than the mainstream modes.



4 The future of Dial-Ride

- 4.1 Dial-a-Ride is delivering its budgeted number of journeys. However, demand will inevitably rise given the increase in the elderly population. The challenge for Dial-a-Ride is to become more efficient in how it delivers journeys in future.

5 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 5.1 This is clearly an inclusion issue as for some people, Dial-a-Ride is their only means of making journeys.

6 Legal powers

- 6.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 Members to note this report.