

Decision Maker: **Adult and Community Portfolio Holder**
For pre decision scrutiny by the Adult and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 10th April 2012

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: **TAXICARD 2012/13 Budget**

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Chief Officer: Lorna Blackwood, Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships, Adult and Community Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

1.1 Following the agreed redistribution of Transport for London funding to the Taxicard Scheme, this report outlines the proposed 2012/13 Bromley Taxicard Budget and updates the Committee on scheme improvements coming into effect from 1st April 2012.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **For the Adult and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee to:**

- a) **comment on the proposed 2012/13 Taxicard Budget, as set out in para 5.2**
- b) **comment on the proposal to allow users to rollover their allocation of unused trips as set out in para 5.3**

2.2 **For the Adult and Community Portfolio Holder to:**

- a) **agree the proposed 2012/13 Bromley Taxicard Budget, as set out in 5.2**
- b) **agree to allow rollover of any unused trips, as set out in 5.3**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost ££81k
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost. £81k
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Commissioning and Partnerships Division / TfL Taxicard funding
 4. Total current budget for this head: £LBB Budget £81k - TfL Allocation £226.3k
 5. Source of funding: ACS Portfolio / TfL Taxicard funding
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Part time admin resource in LBB to process applications for the Taxicard scheme
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 18 hours per week
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): As of January 2012 there were 1,457 Bromley Taxicard members
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Taxicard scheme is a subsidised door-to-door transport service for Londoners with serious mobility impairments and to whom public transport is not usually accessible. Financed by 32 participating London Boroughs and Transport for London (TfL), the scheme increases independence and mobility of disabled and older people by providing subsidised trips in licensed taxis or private hire vehicles.
- 3.2 The scheme is administered by London Councils Transport and Environment Committee on behalf of the participating boroughs and an annual administration charge is payable to London Councils.
- 3.3 The Bromley Taxicard scheme has undergone a number of changes over the past financial years. Following a series of cost saving measures introduced to avert a considerable projected overspend in 2010/11, including a reduction in borough subsidy, increase in member contribution and ending of double swiping, the Adult and Community Portfolio Holder, supported by the policy Development and Scrutiny Committee, agreed to re-introduce double swiping effective from April 2011.
- 3.4 Following these changes, the current scheme parameters are as follows:
- Monthly trip allocation: 8 trips (unused trips cannot be carried forwards)
 - Maximum borough subsidy: £8.30
 - Minimum member contribution: £2.50
 - Double swiping is permitted
- 3.5 The London wide Taxicard contract was recently tendered, and as a result of this process, a number of scheme improvements will take effect from 1st April 2012:
- The proportion of Taxicard trips made using Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) is set to increase from the existing 12% to over 20% which will benefit users, as the pricing structure is lower compared to a black taxi
 - Taxicard holders will be able to book Taxicard trips from licensed PHV offices, although they will not be permitted to 'hail' a PHV from the street, as this remains illegal
 - The 'run in' will be reduced from the current maximum of £2.40 to £0. This is the maximum amount a taxi meter can show prior to the journey commencing (not applicable to PHV)
 - The cost to the borough of cancelled journeys will be reduced. The Taxicard user will still lose their trip allocation
 - Post Olympic Games, it is proposed that a fixed cost is introduced for black taxi journeys over 3 miles, allowing users to establish the cost prior to undertaking a longer journey.
- 3.6 Whilst it is difficult to predict what impact (if any) the Olympic Games will have on the Bromley Taxicard service, Computer Cab have advised there will be occasions where journey length and times are affected due to road closures and increased traffic. The costs, are therefore likely to be higher for journeys into and around London during this period, particularly in the vicinity of Olympic venues. Taxicard users will be advised both in advance and during the Olympic Games, when making a booking.
- 3.7 From April to January 11/12, a total of 13,732 trips have been made by Bromley members, a 3.5% reduction compared to the same period last year. This follows a similar pattern across other London boroughs where only 2 of the 32 boroughs have seen a growth in trips made. Of the remaining 30 boroughs, the reduction in trips ranged from 3.5% to 46%.

3.8 Based on the journey trends over the past 10 months, it is estimated that there will be an underspend in 11/12 of approximately £70k. As TfL did not agree to any sharing of underspends, the 11/12 underspend will be refunded to TfL, due to a historic arrangement whereby the borough budgets are spent prior to the TfL allocation being made available.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The recommendations from this report support the Council's Building a Better Bromley 2020 Vision of Supporting Independence; whereby particularly older people and vulnerable adults, are supported to lead active, healthy and independent lives.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The combined Council and TfL Taxicard budget was for 2011/12 was £221k

	2011/12
	£, 000
LBB Contribution	81
TfL Contribution	140
Expenditure	<u>151</u>
Variance Returned to TfL	<u>70</u>

The projected actual cost of the scheme is £151k leaving an underspend of £70k which will be returned to TfL

5.2 As previously advised, the TfL funding allocation awarded for Bromley Taxicard is set to rise over the coming years and for 2012/13, Bromley will receive an allocation of up to £225k. Given that TfL are unwilling to share any underspend, it is proposed to reduce the initial Council contribution, from £81k to £34.6k with the balance being held in the Council's contingency fund to cover any potential overspends or cost pressures in other ACS transport budgets. The proposed 2012/13 Taxicard Budget is set out below:

	2012/13
	£, 000
LBB Budget	34.6
TfL Maximum Allocation	226.3
London Councils Admin	-5.6
Total trip budget available	<u>255.3</u>
LBB Contingency fund	46.4

5.3 Given the 2012/13 trip budget is significantly higher than the total projected cost for the scheme in the current financial year, officers are confident that even the most significant growth can be contained within the available budget. In order to provide additional benefit to service users from the increased budget, it is proposed that to allow greater flexibility in managing individual trip allocations, rollover of unused trips into the following month be permitted. The financial impact of this will be minimal as Bromley Taxicard members take an average of 1.6 trips a month, and the maximum annual allocation will not exceed 96 trips.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Taxi Card Scheme arrangements are made between the Council and other boroughs and TFL under S240 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 which enables local authorities to enter into agreements with Transport for London for concessionary travel. Unlike the Blue Badge Scheme and Freedom passes which are required to be provided by law, Taxicards are a discretionary service. The Council entered an agreement to participate in the scheme in 2007.
- 6.2 The Taxicard Scheme is managed by London Councils Transport and Environment Committee on behalf of the participating boroughs under the joint committee arrangements. However, the terms of the scheme, including matters relating to discretionary eligibility and number of trips remain a matter for the individual Boroughs.
- 6.3 Whilst the taxi-card service is discretionary the Council is required by virtue of s2 Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970 ['CSDPA'] to provide home based services for disabled and ill people ordinarily resident in their area where 'it is necessary to meet the needs of that person'. These services extend to "travelling to and from his home for the purpose of participating in any services provided under s29 National Assistance Act 1948 and s2 CSDPA". However when assessing if it is necessary to provide transport for an individual the Council can take into account the availability of alternative transport provision. This includes access to concessionary schemes such as this one. As such this scheme can assist the Council to meet its statutory duty to those with community care needs.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Changes to the Taxicard Scheme and TfL Taxicard Funding Redistribution - Adult and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee (02 November 2010) Taxicard Update – Current Position - Adult and Community Services Policy Development Committee (29 March 2011) Taxicard Update - Adult and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee (30 November 2011)