



THE LONDON BOROUGH

**REPORT OF THE TRANSPORT REFERENCE GROUP  
2009/10**

**April 2010**

## **Working Group Membership**

### **Elected Members**

Councillor Judi Ellis (Chairman)  
Councillor Roger Charsley  
Councillor Peter Fookes (for final two meetings)  
Councillor William Huntington-Thresher  
Mrs Maureen Falloon  
Mrs Leslie Marks

### **Officer Support**

Anne Watts, Assistant Director: Strategic Development and Performance  
Jonathan Richards, Graduate Management Trainee  
Silvio Giannotta, Commissioning Officer  
Philippa Stone, Scrutiny Coordinator  
Christine Reeks, Democratic Services Officer

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page No.</b>
1. Reasons for Review and Terms of Reference	4
2. Findings and Recommendations	7
3. Conclusion	11
4. Appendix A: Background Documents	12

## 1. Reasons for Review and Terms of Reference

1.1 Every Bromley resident is affected by issues surrounding transportation. Problems with Transport can seriously affect the choice and independence of individuals. Access to good, high quality transportation will impact on the 'Supporting Independence in Bromley' programme which is reviewing the way social care is delivered to service users. This increasing drive towards greater independence is at the heart of the Adult and Community Services Portfolio Plan and a central theme of the 'Building a Better Bromley: 2020 Vision'.

1.2 At the 2008 Portfolio Planning Conference<sup>1</sup> adequate provision of transportation emerged as the overwhelming issue for key stakeholders across the Borough, and it was recognised that a review of transport services was necessary as a key priority for the Council is "Supporting Independence".

1.6 The agreed Terms of Reference for the Review were:

- i) Scrutiny of the ACS Review of current transport and travel support arrangements, with a focus on:
  - Identifying the current transport arrangements provided by the Council to support people with independent living.
  - Identifying issues in relation to the current use of local public and private transport by people with a disability (including the use of DLA, Motability, Dial-a-ride, local TfL buses and train services
  - The range of current services provided by the Council, e.g. ACS transport fleet services, black taxi card service, disabled freedom pass service etc.,
  - The quality of services (I.e. reliability, flexibility availability) ,
  - Cost effectiveness of service (i.e. unit costs comparisons, value for money etc)
- ii) Scrutiny of the outcomes of the ACS Review of future travel requirements of people requiring council support, in line with "Supporting Independence in Bromley" this will include consideration of :
  - Future projected demands
  - Planned developments for other travel support arrangements within the Council and also key partners e.g. health, and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector
  - The future use and impact of personal budgets to meet service user choices

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<sup>1</sup> Held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

- Developments to improve access to mainstream transport services for vulnerable people
- The Review underway by TfL on this issue.

1.7 The following witnesses provided evidence to the review:

- Eleanor Yates, Disability Voice Bromley
- Iain Forbes, Head of Transport Strategy, Environmental Services
- Brian Curle, Group Manager Transport, Adult and Community Services
- Trevor Uys, Team Manager Transition Team, Adult and Community Services.
- Jonathon Richards

1.8 The Reference Group met on five occasions from November 2009 to March 2010.

## 2. Adult and Community Services Transport Review

- 2.1 In undertaking the review, the Reference Group considered the transport review *Access to Transport Services within the London Borough of Bromley for Older People; People with Learning Disabilities; Mental Health Problems; Physical Disabilities; and Sensory Impairment*. The Review outlined current transport provision and schemes; transport issues across the Borough; regional and pan-London developments and provided a comparison of transport services delivered by other Local Authorities.
- 2.2 There is currently a wide range of transport provision across the Borough including public transport, Dial-a-Ride, the Blue Badge Parking Scheme and the Motability Scheme. Freedom Passes entitle individuals over the age of 60 or those with an eligible disability to travel free at any time on Transport for London services and from 09:30 on National Rail services. The Freedom Pass scheme costs around £244 million per year paid for by the 33 London Boroughs.<sup>2</sup> The Travel Mentoring Service offered by Transport for London provides support to disabled travellers who would like to make use of mainstream public transport. Service users are offered advice on planning a journey using accessible routes and, where necessary, a mentor can accompany individuals on their first journeys. The aim of the scheme is to help travellers with disabilities to develop confidence towards becoming independent travellers. National Rail offer a Travel Assistance programme providing staff to meet travellers at their departure station, assisting them onto and off the train and ensuring similar arrangements are in place at any interchange stops and at the final destination. National Rail recommends that travellers contact train operators 24 hours in advance of a trip to ensure that a high standard of help is provided.
- 2.3 Borough-transport is mainly provided for day centre services for older people and individuals with learning disabilities who use day care services. Over 199,000 trips per year are undertaken by the Borough-transport fleet and the fleet consists of 20 custom-built, low-floor, fully-accessible coaches. The coaches can carry up to 11 passengers, two of whom can be full-time wheelchair users.<sup>3</sup> There is little flexibility in the daily schedule of the coaches and the unpredictability of traffic and other delays are compounded as the schedule provides few opportunities to make time up. Borough-transport is also faced with a number of conflicting demands and this highlights the need for a review of Borough-transport, which has adapted to meet needs as contracts and services have evolved, rather than having an overarching strategy of its own.
- 2.4 Clients using public transport are faced with a range of issues and problems. The lack of accessibility of stops and stations can be explained by physical obstacles and distance to services. Unlike other travellers, vulnerable transport users are less able to adapt quickly where transport problems occur. Understanding information about routes, times and

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<sup>2</sup> Access to Transport Services within the London Borough of Bromley for Older People; People with Learning Disabilities; Mental Health Problems; Physical Disabilities; and Sensory Impairment. Page 14

<sup>3</sup> This does not include the driver and escort which takes the capacity up to 13.

destinations of public transport can be an obstacle, particularly for clients with learning disabilities. Also information can be inaccessible to wheelchair users or those with a visual impairment when it is placed too high. Issues of confidence are further compounded by the element of fear; particularly fear of bullying and harassment. This fear may not always be held by the service user themselves but by family members, friends or carers, particularly those of clients with learning disabilities. Low self confidence can be as much of an obstacle to using public transport as any physical barrier. Schemes such as travel training and mentoring can help overcome this lack of confidence and these schemes involve helping individuals build levels of confidence by assisting them plan their own journeys and understand routes and timetables.

- 2.5 Bromley Council's Transition Team support the transfer of care services between the Children and Young People Department and Adult and Community Services as children with more complex needs become adults. Young People with substantial needs are a priority for the Transition Team to ensure that continuing care needs and service provision are established within Adults Services. People who have less complex needs are likely to most benefit from schemes such as travel training. However, it is essential that people who could benefit from the schemes are identified early as once using Borough-transport, a dependency on the service can grow. This can then affect an individual's confidence with the option of travel training being less attractive and thus affecting a person's independence. , .
- 2.6 There is no one-size-fits-all transportation scheme and each method of transport has benefits as well as disadvantages. There needs to be a balance struck between using the form of transport most suitable at any given time and in promoting all the available options and opportunities to assist people in living more independent lives.

### **3. Findings and Final Recommendations**

- 3.1 In considering the evidence presented at Reference Group meetings, the Reference Group has arrived at a number of findings as detailed below.
- 3.2 The Reference Group broadly supported the recommendations within the Adult and Community Services review into Access to Transport Services within the London Borough of Bromley subject to clarifications outlined in this report.

#### Establishing a Bromley Mobility Forum

- 3.3 The Reference Group felt that it would be beneficial to establish a Mobility Forum to ensure a strong mobility voice across the Borough.
- 3.4 As mobility impacts on all service user groups, Members felt that membership of a Mobility Forum should be made up of nominated representatives from existing voluntary and community sector forums,

with representatives from other service provider organisations and Officers from the London Borough of Bromley.

3.5 The membership of the Bromley Mobility Forum would be made up from two nominated representatives from each of the following:

- Carers Forum
- Mental Health Forum
- Learning Disability Forum
- Bromley Council on Ageing Forum
- Children and Families Forum
- Ethnic Network Forum

Plus one representative from each of the following:

- Service Providers: Bromley Sparks and Leonard Cheshire
- Adult and Community Services,
- Children and Young People and
- Environmental Services

3.6 The Voluntary Sector Reference Group fully supported the establishment of a Bromley Mobility Forum. It was proposed that it be organised along similar lines to existing Service User Forums with a Chairman and a part-time paid Co-ordinator to support the work of the Forum and carry out administrative tasks. Community Links Bromley agreed to convene an initial meeting with the Chairs of the Forums listed in 3.5 and other interested parties to finalise the Forum's membership and to discuss the initial work programme for the Mobility Forum.

3.7 Funding for the Forum has been identified in the 2010/2011 Local implementation Plan, submitted to TfL for funding for use in mobility and access issues. The funding sits within the Environmental Services budget and any expenditure would be subject to agreement from the Environment Portfolio Holder. There are no funding arrangements identified beyond 2010/2011 and alternative funding avenues would need to be explored in order to support continuation of the Forum after a year.

3.8 The Transport Reference Group suggested that the Forum should be time-limited with a focused work programme being developed for the Forum and terms of reference that included a future business plan and an exit strategy for the Forum. Members also suggested that the transport Commissioning Officer from Adult and Community Services should be the Lead Officer for the Local Authority.

#### **Recommendation One**

**That a Bromley Mobility Forum be established, initially time limited for one year, with a focused work programme and clear Terms of Reference outlining a future business plan and clear exit strategy.**



## Travel Training

- 3.9 Travel training helps individuals build confidence when using public transport, with the ultimate aim of providing the necessary skills to enable people to use public transport independently. As there are differing levels of need it is clear that independent travel will not be appropriate or suitable for everyone..
- 3.10 Travel training has formerly been provided to a number of service users by Bromley Council. It is important to ensure that support for travel training is ongoing as this is crucial in sustaining the confidence of participants in the scheme and securing the success of the programme.
- 3.11 The importance of starting travel training from an early age can not be underlined enough and Members highlighted the importance of initiating the programme of travel training from primary school age, possibly from the age of eleven.
- 3.12 For individuals who have not benefited from early travel training, it is important to develop a comprehensive programme to ensure that essential skills are developed in order to promote independence.

### **Recommendation Two**

**That a comprehensive travel training programme be developed and approved by the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder. This would provide early travel training for primary aged pupils and their families, especially those who have special needs in accessing public transport.**

## Travel Plans for Day Opportunities

- 3.13 It is important to consider the impact on journey times when services and day opportunities for service users are commissioned. Transport issues can have a major impact on service users and any travel plans that are developed would need to reflect the needs and circumstances of individual service users.
- 3.14 As more day opportunities are created, Commissioners should begin to consider more efficient ways of transporting clients to activities. Opportunities across the Borough should be commissioned with journey times in mind.

### **Recommendation Three**

**That the travel needs of service users are thoroughly considered when new services are commissioned**

### Proposals for a Transport Awareness Campaign

- 3.15 The Community Safety Team has been developing proposals for an awareness campaign surrounding independent travel. The purpose of the campaign is to heighten awareness of the intimidation and bullying of vulnerable people using public transport.
- 3.16 A range of stakeholders including the newly formed Bromley Mobility Forum, Bromley Mencap, Bromley Youth Council and Safer Neighbourhood Teams should be involved in the consultation surrounding the content of the awareness campaign.

#### **Recommendation Four**

**That proposals for a transport awareness campaign be developed in conjunction with Bromley Mobility Forum, the Environment PDS Transport Liaison Group, other LSP Partnership Boards and Safer Neighbourhood Teams.**

### Timetable for Implementing Recommendations in the ACS Transport Review

- 3.17 The Reference Group felt that the Bromley Mobility Forum should hold its initial meeting immediately following the Environment PDS meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in order to finalise its work programme, priorities for action and terms of reference. In light of this Members felt that the proposed implementation plan presented to the Health, Social Care and Housing Partnership Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 should be revised to reflect this amended timetable and forwarded to the environment PDS Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010.
- 3.18 Members also felt that Bromley Mobility Forum should be consulted regarding the design and content of the Bromley Transport Access Guide.

#### **Recommendation Five**

**That the timetable for implementing recommendations from the Adult and Community Services Transport Review be revised in light of the recommendations from this Reference Group.**

## **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 Whilst there are large obstacles to overcome that would require commitment and planning from a number of organisations; simple travel issues can be overcome relatively easily. It is these small obstacles that cause frustration to service users and reduce individuals' confidence in using public transport, encouraging demand on door-to-door alternatives.
- 4.2 Where there is a lack of information around using different forms of transport, older and disabled people in particular can experience a reduction in their levels of confidence in using public transport. This can lead to dependency on more traditional forms of transportation which can limit independence.
- 4.3 There is no one-size-fits-all solution to transport issues and a balance will need to be struck between the needs of service users and the demands placed on service providers. The use of different forms of transport should continue to be promoted with the aim of encouraging independence for all.
- 4.4 A Bromley Mobility Forum would act as an independent co-ordinating body, ensuring that the views of all stakeholders are considered and that any policies that are implemented reflect the ever changing needs of transport users.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

- 5.1 The Chairman of the Reference Group would like to thank all those involved for their hard work and dedication in concluding this review in a very short timescale.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Access to Transport Services within the London Borough of Bromley for Older People, People with Learning disabilities; Mental Health Problems; Physical Disabilities; and Sensory Impairment. (18 January 2010)

Transport Review Report presented to the Health, Social Care and Housing Partnership Board (25 January 2010)

Transport Review Report presented to the Health, Social Care and Housing Partnership Board (22 March 2010)

Notes from the Transport Reference Group Meetings Held on 2 November 2009, 7 December 2009, 4 February 2010, 4 March 2010 and 29 March 2010.