

**Decision Maker:** CARE SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

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

**Title:** CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT - ADULTS PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE

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**Chief Officer:** Ade Adetosoye, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director: Education, Care and Health Services

**Ward:** Borough-wide

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 At their meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the Council's Executive approved the award of a contract to Greenwich Service Plus Ltd for the delivery of the adults passenger transport service, for a period of 3 years and 9 months from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.
- 1.2 This report provides:
- a) An annual review of the performance of the contract since the start date as required by CPR 23.3;
  - b) Details on how the contract is managed by the Council; and,
  - c) An update to Members following the implementation of charging and user satisfaction consultation
- 1.3 The passenger transport service supports older people and adults with learning disabilities and involves travel to and from day care centres and other locations. The number of adults using the service is currently 354 which includes a small number of authorised one- to-one carers. Ad-hoc journeys are also undertaken as necessary to support the care of clients.
- 1.4 The contract was awarded to Greenwich Service Plus Ltd (GS Plus) who are a company, wholly owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich (R.B.G). The company has vast experience in the type of specialist transport required by the Council, and provides R.B.G with similar services, extending also to Special Educational Needs transport for children.
- 1.5 The contract set-up involved the transfer of the former Bromley team of bus crews and office staff to the new provider which helped the smooth transition of the service, aided continuity and most importantly minimised any impact of change for the clients themselves. Members were updated previously on the Equality Impact assessment which was conducted prior to implementation of the £15 return journey charge where we engaged with residents

- 1.6 A fleet of 18 new vehicles were brought in to launch the service, which continues to operate from Central Depot as before.
  - 1.7 During the first year of the contract GS Plus have worked closely with the Council to further develop key performance indicators, IT systems and revised back-office procedures.
  - 1.8 Service quality and contract compliance has been closely monitored throughout the first year with regular engagement with day centre providers, with scheduled and unplanned checks across the network forming part of the day to day support for this contract.
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## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Care Services PDS Committee is invited to note the performance of the adult passenger transport contract and the ongoing developments to meet service need.**

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy. Existing Policy Context/Statements
  2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
  2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Adult Social Care
  4. Total current budget for this head: £1,398k
  5. Source of funding: Core
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): ECS .5
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 17
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement.
  2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable. No Executive decision.
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): There are currently 354 service users.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The contract commenced in December 2015 with 18 vehicles in service to support the Bromley contract. Two different types of vehicles were allocated, the majority being the larger coachbuilt style and others forming a small group of minibuses. Both types are fully accessible with tail-lifts fitted and flexible seating layouts to accommodate wheelchairs.
- 3.2 At the start of the contract, the routes were serviced similarly to the previous operation however over the first year, due to certain changes in day centre provision and a reduction in the number of clients requiring transport, the routes have been revised.
- 3.3 GS Plus now continually reviews the vehicle and crew allocation according to demand ensuring that limits on journey times for clients are not exceeded.
- 3.4 Staffing flexibility in this respect has been well managed by GS Plus, helped by having access to their own staff agency within the GS Plus group. Changes in vehicle requirements are also aided by opportunities for re-allocation to the RBG service.
- 3.5 As well as the day-to-day transport service across the Borough, the contract has also worked well in supporting additional travel requirements for clients using the Council's care service. Ad-hoc journey's both in and outside of the Borough have been undertaken, often at short notice and occasionally outside of normal operating hours. Examples of such travel are movements to respite centres or transfers between nursing homes.
- 3.6 Flexibility of the passenger service contractor has also helped when on a number of occasions, GS Plus have responded to a service need for the SEN Transport team, in circumstances where no other listed provider could help.
- 3.7 The contract provides for a period of notice to withdraw a complete route if the situation with a particular day centre changes however in general, minor fluctuations in numbers carried are normal and accommodated within the contract.
- 3.8 There has been a number of changes across the day care service where routes have been affected. On those occasions, the contractor has reviewed the wider operating network resulting in a reduction in vehicles and crews required. In April 2016, the fleet reduced from 18 to 16 and again in December 2016, when the fleet reduced by a further 2 to 14. The vehicles withdrawn were the smaller minibus type as these offered less flexibility for the service.
- 3.9 Overall, the passenger numbers when compared with tendered quantity reduced to a level (525 to 354) where the price per passenger is uplifted to a higher band. The charge increased from £24.60 to £27.67 in accordance with the contract. If numbers increase to the next band, the rate will return to £24.60. This is likely following the transfer of other day centre transport to GS Plus in April 2017.
- 3.10 In addition to those carried on behalf of the Council and where the charge is part of a user's Direct Payment. Others who attend certain day centres previously under Bromley's care service may now following re-assessment, travel as 'private' clients and pay GS Plus direct for their transport.
- 3.11 Certain other mid-day journeys for day service activities (LD's) were switched to the new centre provider contracts which meant that they were withdrawn from the core transport contract with minimal impact on their business and no direct change for those who travel.
- 3.12 With the contract charges based on a cost per passenger journey basis it remains in the interest of GS Plus to generate private business from across the borough. The contract allows for mixed travel of LBB and private clients with the approval of the authorised officer.

- 3.13 GS Plus are keen to expand their involvement with the Council and will tender for further transport opportunities as they arise.
- 3.14 It remains in the interest of the Council to ensure that it has the availability of a reliable and successful business to provide its passenger transport service requirements.
- 3.15 In April 2017, three other adult passenger transport agreements included with certain day service providers comes to an end. Recently, the Commissioning Board agreed to merge those transport movements into the core service.
- 3.16 GS Plus is therefore fully engaged with the Council and the current day service providers to absorb those passengers into their service, from April 2017. Engagement with users and day centres continues and include us introducing GS Plus at the day centres and meeting clients to re-assure them of minimal change.
- 3.17 Vehicle and staffing arrangements will be revised to take account of additional workload however where possible re-routing will take place where integration with existing routes allows.

### 3.18 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 3.19 From the outset of the contract an agreed method of monitoring was in place together with Key Performance Indicators. Scheduled checks are made on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis and take place at the operating base in Central Depot. The extent of the checks is as follows;

Weekly	4 routes selected by LBB (reduced from 8 during the first 6 months of the contract). Areas covered include condition and suitability of the vehicle and route matters.
Monthly	Maximum of 5 routes selected by LBB. Areas covered include reporting of incidents, vehicle safety, journey schedules, staff conduct and communication
Quarterly	An office based overview meeting including checks on driver records, compliance, insurance, maintenance records, training, service matters

- 3.20 In addition to the above checks, spot checks are made at destination points and a monthly contract management meeting takes place with client officers from both ECHS and ECS in attendance.
- 3.21 At 6 monthly intervals, a special contract meeting is organised with senior management of GS Plus Ltd, chaired by the Assistant Director of Environment & Community Services (SS&GS) with colleagues from ECS Commissioning in attendance.
- 3.22 Where any operational issues have been raised by the day centre providers (e.g early arrival, parking issues at centres), GS Plus have acted swiftly to resolve the matter and continue to demonstrate good relationships with partner organisations.
- 3.23 Complaints of any nature are discussed at the monthly contract meetings and as necessary by monitoring officers during the course of their work.
- 3.24 During the first year of the contract there were three enquiries concerning the need to transport clients who were unable to transfer to a wheelchair from a bed. GS Plus does not operate a vehicle adapted to carry a stretcher so were unable to undertake these ad-hoc movements. This need was met through a provider listed on the Council's SEN Transport framework.

### **3.25 RISK**

- 3.26 The Council continues to review its day service provision which drives the demand for passenger transport and currently it remains in the interest of the Council, to ensure that it has available a reliable, professional and successful operator to provide its passenger transport service requirements.
- 3.27 As a licenced public service vehicle operator, GS Plus must ensure that a suitable management structure is in place, along with procedures that uphold compliance in respect of vehicles, drivers and operating standards.
- 3.28 If the standards fall below the requirements under the licence, restrictions can be imposed by the Traffic Commissioner which could affect the ability to provide the service.
- 3.29 The company has in place a comprehensive business continuity plan which supports the service through unplanned events. The plan includes working closely with the Council during any instance of severe weather that may prevent travel for vulnerable clients.
- 3.30 Emergency arrangements are being revised by the Council for incidents where clients are unable to return to their normal place of residence and their emergency contacts cannot be reached. Designated places of safety will be made available to the contractor.
- 3.31 In the event of a disruption to road fuel supplies, GS Plus would engage with the Council's arrangements under which some vehicles delivering essential services would be able to access fuel at Designated Filling Stations (London Resilience).

### **3.32 BENEFITS**

- 3.33 The benefits of having an experienced organisation has been noticeable throughout the first year of operation. Through their work with RBG, senior management in GS Plus have in-depth understanding of how transport should be delivered within the care service sector, the difficulties that may arise from time to time and how to overcome them.
- 3.34 The contract calls for the passenger vehicle service to support major emergency response in the borough if required. GS Plus has experience of such requirements from RBG and have set up a list of staff who would be available to call if required. Passenger vehicles of the type operated have been used in the past for the evacuation of residents to rest centres or to provide on-site waiting accommodation whilst decisions on their safety are being made.
- 3.35 The contract has provided a high standard of passenger transport for the clients. There have been no issues relating to collection and arrival times other than minor changes that fall between the specification requirements.
- 3.36 Where difficulties may have arisen with individual clients whilst travelling or indeed returning to their homes, the company have been wholly supportive, staff have acted professionally and have gone beyond their duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the clients.

### **3.37 MANAGEMENT**

- 3.38 The contract is managed jointly between Environment & Community Services and Education, Care & Health.
- 3.39 At depot level, day-to-day monitoring of the contract and co-ordination of ad-hoc transport requirements was absorbed into the existing ECS Transport Operations section that controls fleet transport and depots for the Council.

- 3.40 The need for the service, client matters, agreements and financial aspects are managed within Commissioning/Care Services at the Civic Centre.
- 3.41 The two sections work closely to ensure that the service is delivered to the specification, that operating standards are upheld and that client expectations are met.
- 3.42 GS Plus Ltd employs a Passenger Transport Services Manager who works from their Greenwich operating base, who visits Bromley regularly each week and is in daily contact with the depot based team.
- 3.43 Staff in the contractor's office at Central Depot are former Bromley employees comprising of a supervisor, a route planner and an administrator.
- 3.44 The LBB Transport Operations Manager and GS Plus Passenger Transport Manager periodically visit each day centre to maintain engagement with senior staff and to ensure that the transport service integrates to their satisfaction.
- 3.45 Since the start of the contract, both the Council and GS Plus have made progress with technology which improves the control of the contract.
- 3.46 With the on-set of charging individual clients for travel (under the fairer charging policy during 2016), it was considered necessary to introduce a proof of carriage system. In April 2016, the Council introduced in conjunction with the contractor, a mobile phone based application, enabling bar-code scanning of a travel card which is set up for each passenger. This captures the point and time of boarding the bus and enables various events to be recorded, particularly if the client is not able to travel. The data is used to support the billing process and for other management purposes.
- 3.47 Also in April 2016, GS Plus introduced a comprehensive passenger transport management system, familiar to the Council, which enables client and route information to be carried by each bus crew, along with details of the allocated staff and vehicle. This system also records planned journey information which is crossed-matched to the Council's bar-coding data and is used in the billing process.
- 3.48 For extended management purposes, the GS Plus fleet of buses is fitted with a GPS tracking system and the Council has access to live vehicle movements from the point of departure from the depot.
- 3.49 Data records from this system are made available to the Council by GS Plus whenever required for investigative or monitoring purposes.
- 3.50 Staff training is monitored by the Council and from the outset of the contract, GS Plus have followed a programme for both drivers and passenger assistants, under a similar approach used in their Greenwich operation.
- 3.51 Topics such as drivers' hours and tachographs, passenger assistance techniques, customer care, disability awareness, first aid and health & safety awareness are included in an ongoing programme for both drivers and passenger assistants. Training records are checked as part of the quarterly monitoring event.
- 3.52 The company has a strict safety regime with a dedicated safety advisor who provides risk assessments for all aspects of the service, particularly where pick-up restrictions may arise

(i.e carry-chair, steps, difficult pathways, etc). Any safety related incidents are swiftly investigated by the safety advisor.

3.53 Due to licencing requirements for private passenger transport businesses, some drivers who transferred to GS Plus underwent a full programme of driver training and testing to obtain the necessary PCV licence category. Periodic training is a statutory requirement in order to uphold the qualification and this is provided by GS Plus on an in-house basis.

3.54 GS Plus operate a successful staff award scheme and since the contract started, one member of the Bromley based team gained recognition for their efforts in connection with the service provision at Bromley. This may have been where a client has been in difficulty or in other circumstances where staff have gone beyond their call of duty.

### **3.55 UPDATE FROM CARE SERVICES**

3.56 Since the implementation of the charging policy, we have received 15 complaints directly associated to the charge and 6 users who were self funders cancelled their transport. We have not seen any reduction in assessed eligible users, there has however been a reduction in attendance at day centres, this is also noted by most other London Boroughs. Some of the reasons for this include services offered by them are no longer required, people using their DP`s in a different way as they choose the care and support they need.

### **3.57 REVIEW OF CONTRACTOR'S LEARNING AND MATURITY TARGETS**

3.58 GS Plus maintain an ongoing connection between both of their operational bases and where possible, replicate good practice and new initiatives into the Bromley operation. As a company, GS Plus are working with an organisation known as The Camden Society, who works across London to support people with learning difficulties into employment and also apprenticeships. GS Plus is hoping to enable clients to help with passenger assistance duties in the RBG operation and if successful, will commence discussions about a similar approach in Bromley.

## **4. SERVICE PROFILE / DATA ANALYSIS**

4.1 The success of the contract is underpinned by firm communication lines involving service users, day service providers and the Council. With the type of transport being undertaken, there are daily fluctuations in demand which can affect the planned schedule. GS Plus manages such changes well and has built good relationships with all interested parties in order to minimise difficulties.

4.2 Passengers numbers using the service have reduced since the contract was tendered from 525 to 354. With a reduction in the number of weekly journeys undertaken, the contract allows for an uplift of between 10-15% increase. GS Plus therefore applied a 12.5% increase to the price per journey rate in the higher band. The charge increased from £24.60 to £27.67 and will reduce again should the journey numbers increase. This is likely following the transfer of other day centre transport to the GS Plus contract in April 2017.

4.3 The schedule of monitoring by the Council feeds into performance indicators covering three main aspects of the service; 1) Vehicles, Routes and Staff. GS Plus regularly exceeded the satisfactory levels during the first year of the contract.

4.4 Appendix 1 shows the levels achieved in those areas from December 2015 to December 2016.

## **5. PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS IN PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 GS Plus is currently a bronze level member of the Transport for London Fleet Operator's Recognition scheme (FORS). The company is working towards re-assessment to achieve silver accreditation.
- 5.2 In its aim to expand the transport element of their business, GS Plus are applying to Transport for London for a Public Carriage Office Private Hire licence. This will assist with the smaller end of passenger transport, typical of that used for SEN Transport provision.

## **6 PLANS FOR ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS IN VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 6.1 The Transport Operations Manager will remain engaged with other authorities through the Association of London Transport Officers (ALTO), and will monitor opportunities for benchmarking and involvement of other authorities who use such procurement methods for this type of service.
- 6.2 In the wider context, the contractor may be successful in winning further business with the Council which could drive opportunities for journey integration for SEN and better use of the fleet during down-time.

## **7. USER / STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION**

- 7.1 Customer liaison is of considerable importance in the adults transport contracted service and during December 2016, GS Plus developed an easy-read survey document which was approved by the Council. Over 300 documents were handed out across the service to enable feedback from clients on satisfaction with their travel. The pictorial based document provided the choice of three levels; good, satisfactory and poor.
- 7.2 Whilst the return was considerably low (36 out of 300), comments were mostly positive.
- 7.3 Positive comments supporting some of the tick sheet data included;
- Praise for certain bus crews
  - Comments concerning good communication from the office
  - Statements saying 'transport is perfect'; 'very happy'; 'happy with everything'
  - Statement saying the client 'is always treated with respect'
- 7.4 The results of the survey were discussed with GS Plus management at the monthly contract meeting and the negative points addressed for improvement. The survey will be repeated annually throughout the term of the contract.
- 7.5 The returns included one comment concerning the cost of travel however this relates to the fairer charging policy and not directly to the contract or provider.
- 7.6 Further information on the survey result is shown in Appendix 2.
- 7.7 Feedback from the day centre providers during the introductory period of the contract was positive. This was established when managers from GS Plus and the Council first visited each centre.
- 7.8 The transition to the contractor was seamless and was enhanced by the transfer of familiar staff, many who had worked within the transport service for a considerable time.

7.9 The vehicles used are branded with both GS Plus and the Council's logo, thereby supporting the familiarity theme and minimising change for those who travel.

## **8. SUSTAINABILITY / IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

8.1 The contract operates similarly to the previous in-house service. The contractor is based in Central Depot where most of the Council's front-line services operate from.

8.2 Since the outset of the contract, the number of vehicle operating have reduced by 4 which resulted in less vehicle movements within the depot complex and improved traffic flows at peak times to and from the depot site.

8.3 The level of vehicles operated however may increase where demand for the service cannot be met from existing resources.

8.4 The Council has an agreement in place with GS Plus to utilise existing re-fuelling apparatus within Central Depot. The company organise their own deliveries to the depot and manage the stock throughput. GS Plus currently uses a 5% blend of bio-diesel obtained through a government framework contract under their association with Greenwich Council.

8.5 As they hold a valid Public Service Vehicle operator's licence, the company has linked up with various private customers within the borough providing accessible transport on an ad-hoc basis.

8.6 GS Plus hope to expand this area of the business in the borough which will benefit borough based private and voluntary organisations who currently have limited choice in the availability of private hire accessible transport.

## **9. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

9.1 The contract delivers a key part of the care service and provides support directly to clients who are eligible to travel in order to meet their care needs who may otherwise be deemed vulnerable

## **10. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

10.1 The contract operates to support the Council's Eligibility Policy for the Provision of Transport for Adult Social Care Service Users.

## **11. COMMISSIONING & PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

11.1 The contract term is 3 years and 9 months, from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019. This aligns with the SEN Transport framework contract which was tendered as a separate lot within the same procurement exercise. An extension period of up to 2 years is possible within the contract.

11.2 The contractor will take over additional day centre transport from existing day service providers on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. This was agreed by the Commissioning Board during October 2016.

11.3 GS Plus are keen to bid for any future transport related opportunities that may arise in the Council. They are also experienced in dealing with the change in demand and have demonstrated with the first year of the contract, how they are able to adjust their resources, with no effect on the Council.

## 12. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 The current budget position for the Transport service is as follows:-

### Adults Passenger Transport

	<u>£000</u>
Budget	1,398
Projected Outturn	1,318
Predicted underspend	<u><u>-80</u></u>

12.2 There is currently an underspend predicted on the budget due to a decrease in the number of passenger journeys due to service provision changes

12.3 The service is chargeable to users as part of the overall Fairer Charging Policy so is means tested as part of a financial assessment. It is estimated that income has been generated of £200k which has been dealt with as part of the budget strategy in 2016/17.

## 13. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 32 Staff transferred to the new provider in December 2015.

## 14. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

14.1 The company is a licenced Public Service Vehicle operator under the Transport Act 1985 and the Public Service Vehicles (Operators' Licences) Regulations 1995.

14.2 Central Depot is the authorised operating centre under the licence.

14.3 Any contractual arrangements for the provision of the service must comply with the Statutory legislation applicable for Local Government contracts and the provision of services under the Care Act 2014 to such and also the Council's own contract standing orders.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Customer Profile, Market Considerations
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Passenger Transport Service – Contract Award 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2015 – Report No: CS14139
	Version CP@5/16

Weekly Checks

	Vehicle Related (signage, cleanliness, equipment, communications, defect reporting)	Route Related (passenger lists, authorisation to travel)	Staff Related
Expected	93%	100%	N/A
Achieved	99%	100%	N/A

Monthly Checks

	Vehicle Related (Specialist equip, driver records, on-board safety/comfort)	Route Related (Route schedules, Route knowledge, journey times)	Staff Related (communication, ID badge, passenger assistant, policies, seating position of PA)
Expected	86%	87%	100%
Achieved	100%	98%	98%

Quarterly Checks

	Vehicle Related (vehicle age, maintenance standards/documentation, tachograph records),	Route Related (blue badges/PCN's, arrival and departure times)	Staff Related (driver licence checks, COC card, Uniform, Training records, PA age restrictions)
Expected	93%	100%	98%
Achieved	99%	78%	97%

## CLIENT SURVEY DATA – DECEMBER 2017

Questions	Answer options	Response from Person using transport	Response from relative or carer using transport	Un-identified as client or carer
Does your bus arrive on time?	Yes	14	9	
	No	4	2	
	Not sure	3	4	1
Do you have a good driver? <i>Friendly, Polite Helpful</i>	Good	20	14	1
	Poor			
	Not sure	1	1	
Do you have a good passenger assistant? <i>Friendly, Polite Helpful</i>	Good	19	14	1
	Poor			
	Not sure	1	1	
What is your bus journey like?	Good	17	12	1
	Poor			
	Not sure	3	3	
Do the transport staff listen to you?	Good	18	12	1
	Poor	1		
	Not sure	2	3	
How Happy are you with the way staff on the bus help you?	Good	18	12	1
	Poor			
	Not sure	1	1	
Does the transport office tell you about changes or problems?	Yes	13	10	1
	No	4	4	
	Not sure	3	1	
Contacting you				
How can we contact you about daily changes?	Telephone	13	9	
	Email	1	4	
	Text	1	3	1
	Mobile	2	3	
	Post	3	3	