

Decision Maker: **Adult and Community Portfolio Holder**

Date: **For pre decision scrutiny by the Adult and Community PDS Committee on 29 March 2011**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **TAXICARD UPDATE - CURRENT POSITION**

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Chief Officer: Terry Rich, Director of Adult and Community Services

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

1.1 Following the report ACS1061 presented to the Adult and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee 8 November 2010, this report provides an update to the PDS on recently agreed changes to methodology for distributing Transport for London Taxicard funding and explores the impact on the Bromley Taxicard scheme.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 **The Adult and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee notes the changes to the distribution of TfL Taxicard funding and its impact on the Bromley Taxicard scheme.**

2.2 **For the Adult and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the reintroduction of double swiping and note budgetary implications.**

2.3 **For the Portfolio Holder to agree the reintroduction of double swiping from the 1st April 2011 and to note that a review of trip numbers will be carried out after six months.**

Corporate Policy

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

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost £227k
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Commissioning and Partnerships Division / TfL Taxicard funding
 4. Total current budget for this head: £(2011/12) LBB Budget £80,980, TfL Allocation £153,102
 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 forwarding to London Councils who administer 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): Currently 1245 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 door-to-door transport service for Londoners with serious mobility impairments and to whom public transport is not usually accessible. Financed by the 32 participating London boroughs and Transport for London (TfL), the scheme increases the independence and mobility of disabled people by providing subsidised trips in licensed London taxis or private hire vehicles. The Taxicard scheme is administered by the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee. The 2011/12 LBB Taxicard budget is £81k plus a TfL contribution of £153k.
- 3.2 Report ACS1061 to the Adult and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on the 2nd November 2010 outlined measures recommended by London Councils to reduce scheme spend in line with available budgets and notified the Committee of plans to redistribute TfL Taxicard funding more equitably amongst participating boroughs.
- 3.3 The London Councils Transport and Environment Committee, have agreed a new methodology to redistribute TfL's Taxicard contribution using three proxy measures:
- The number of borough residents 65 years of age and over
 - The number of Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance recipients in the borough
 - The number of active Taxicard members in each borough
- 3.4 Combined with the LBB contribution, this has resulted in an overall increase to the available funds in Bromley. The redistribution of funding will be implemented over a 3 year period, with the full effect in 2014/15. Below is a breakdown of the allocation to the Council throughout the implementation process:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	TfL Allocation based on 85% 09/10 Distribution + 15% formula	TfL Allocation based on 67% 09/10 Distribution + 33% formula	TfL Allocation based on 33% 09/10 Distribution + 67% formula	TfL Allocation 100% formula
LBB Allocation from TfL	£ 153,102	£ 216,882	£ 337,356	£ 454,286
LBB Contribution	£80,980	£80,980 + inflation increase	TBC	TBC

Boroughs are expected to spend their contribution first and can decide whether they want to implement the cost saving measures agreed in 10/11. However if a borough's Taxicard scheme costs less than the combined Borough contribution plus the allocation from TfL, the surplus could be redistributed to those boroughs who implemented the cost saving measures but have a projected overspend on their combined Borough and TfL allocation.

Double Swiping

- 3.5 One of the measures proposed by London Councils to reduce spend was an end to the facility to "double swipe". Double swiping allows Taxicard members to use two subsidies together in a single journey, providing the option of taking fewer but longer trips. This practice has been particularly popular in areas where travel distances are longer – e.g. in outer London boroughs like Bromley. Double swiping has therefore not been available to Bromley Taxicard users since 01 December 2010.
- 3.6 Given the size and geographical location of the borough, double swiping was popular amongst Bromley members and its ending resulted in a number of comments and three official

complaints (not counting telephone comments) as it restricts user choice and control over the management of monthly trip allocation. In addition to user comments/complaints, the measure was singled out by the Bromley Mobility Forum and the PDSI partnership group as restrictive and unfair.

- 3.7 Although the decision was taken to end double swiping, members of the PDS Committee accepted Bromley members would be disproportionately affected by this measure and recommended London Councils should be lobbied to reconsider double swiping.
- 3.8 Due to improved budget position for 2011/12 it is now possible to review whether double swiping should be reintroduced.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Upon joining the pan-London scheme (2007), the Council was required to satisfy a number of conditions imposed by TfL, which included retaining the existing budget commitment in future years, with yearly inflationary increase.

2011/12 Budget

- 5.2 The trip budget will be approximately £227k (£153k TfL + £81k LBB, minus £7k admin fee), an increase of approximately £57k compared with the 2010/11 budget. Part of this amount will be required to cover scheme growth estimated by London Councils at 14.8% (based on previous trends).

Below is an estimation for the total scheme cost in 2011/12:

- 2010/11 average trips: 1680 per month
- Average trips + estimated growth: 1929 per month / 23,148 per year
- Potential cost of scheme: £192k (total trips x £8.30 [max borough subsidy])
- **Estimated budget surplus: £35k**

- 5.3 During 2009/10 Bromley members completed 2,810 double swiped trips at a cost of £22,897. If double swiping were to be reintroduced from 01 April 2011, it is estimated 3,226 'double swiped' trips will be made (based on the growth estimate 14.8%) at a projected cost of £26,289.
- 5.4 With an estimated budget surplus of £35k (see 5.2 above), re-introducing double swiping from 01 April 2011 would result in an approximate £8k margin to cover any additional/unanticipated scheme growth*:

Budget Surplus	£35,000
Cost of double swiping	£26,289
Resultant margin	£8,711

*As of the 01 December 2010, a temporary suspension on new Taxicard applications was introduced, it is therefore likely that the level of growth may be slightly higher than anticipated when the suspension is lifted 01 April 2011, due to the backlog of applications.

5.5 Due to the relatively little resultant margin, trip growth will be closely monitored during the initial six months of the financial year to ensure the scheme does not overspend. Should the review indicate a potential, a potential measure for reducing scheme cost is the introduction of a temporary cap on the monthly trip allocation each member receives. Limiting the monthly allocation to a maximum of 6 trips per month would impact upon approximately 70 Taxicard members and generate saving by reducing the actual number of trips taken.

2012/13 Budget

5.7 Given the substantial increase in allocation from TfL (3.4 above), it is anticipated that should the Council maintain its existing contribution, the combined trip budget for 2012/13 will be in the region of £300k. Given the changes in demographics, the scheme will be closely monitored to ensure any expansion is contained within allocated budgets and no further financial implications arise.

<p>Non-Applicable Sections:</p>	<p>Legal Implications Personnel Implications</p>
<p>Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)</p>	<p>Changes to the Taxicard Scheme and TfL Taxicard Funding Redistribution presented to the Adult and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee (02 November 2010)</p> <p>Taxicard – Budget Update and TfL Funding Redistribution presented to London Councils’ Transport and Environment Committee (14 October 2010)</p> <p>Taxicard – Budget Update and TfL Funding Redistribution presented to London Councils’ Transport and Environment Committee (16 September 2010)</p>