**Customer Service and Operational
Performance Panel**

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Date: 12 July 2023

Item: Assisted Transport Services Update

_____

This paper will be considered in public

1   Summary

1.1   This paper outlines the work carried out to progress the Assisted Transport Services (ATS) strategy since the last update to the Panel on 6 December 2022. This includes the updated Roadmap for review.

1.2   It also provides an update on how ATS continues to adapt to support Londoners with reduced mobility in the post pandemic world.

2   Recommendation

2.1   The Panel is asked to note the paper.

3   Background

3.1   ATS refers to the range of pre-booked services available to assist people with limited mobility who require additional help getting around. Services available in London include door-to-door transport services, such as Dial-a-Ride (DaR) and Taxicard, alongside enablers to using general public transport, such as travel mentoring. As Turn up and Go services do not require pre-booking, they do not come under the ATS umbrella.

3.2   A review of the current ATS strategy and roadmap has led to a refresh of priority areas for improvement, considering changes to our operating context and customer demand patterns since the start of the pandemic.

3.3   The broad principles of the original strategy and roadmap remain the same, with our vison to provide world leading ATS.

3.4   Recognising on-going funding constraints, the ATS Strategy will continue to focus on delivering the best outcomes for our customers, through a series of incremental actions aimed at the following priority areas for improvement:

(a)   Improving and integrating the end-to-end customer experience;

(b)   Improving TfL's understanding of the Assisted Transport market;

(c)   Increasing awareness of the choices available to customers; and

(d)   Optimising capacity and making the best use of available funding.

3.5 The Mayor's Transport Strategy commits TfL to delivering improvements in these areas, based around five key design principles:

(a) consistently **safe and reliable** journeys, with a customer focus, including highly trained staff across the whole network;

(b) providing **convenience** through information and support, to improve user confidence in journey planning and independent travelling;

(c) allowing users **flexibility and choice** in their preferred mode, time of travel, booking approach and level of assistance;

(d) providing a seamless and **integrated** multi-modal service, single user platform and personalised account, that incorporate all public transport modes including dedicated assisted transport services; and

(e) utilising the latest technological **innovation** in bookings, payments, service routing, customer care and performance monitoring, to ensure the system is convenient, efficient and provides value for money.

3.6 ATS continues to adapt and support customers in line with the above principles, updates on this work are provided below.

4 ATS Passenger support

4.1 Although demand remains below pre-pandemic levels, demand for the period (October 2022 – April 2023) is 30 per cent higher than the same period last year. This financial year we are 12 per cent higher than same period last year.

4.2 Since the pandemic the DaR provides a service between 07:00hrs to 22:00hrs, from the 21 August we will be extending our service hours to 23:00hrs.

4.3 Between October 2022 – April 2023, we met trip requests at a level of 89 per cent, against a target of 90 per cent. The level of successful trip requests has been below our target due to factors such as additional bank holidays and resourcing challenges.

4.4 In response to the increased demand, since April 2023, we have onboarded four new drivers and are also currently training eight additional drivers.

4.5 We have also commenced the recruitment for four new Duty managers to support reservations and bookings within the Main Control Centre.

4.6 We continue encouraging our colleagues and customers to take appropriate action to keep themselves safe – including using hand sanitiser and wearing a face covering if that helps customers to travel with confidence.

4.7 The procurement activity for the Multi Occupancy Accessible Transport service (MOAT 3) has now been completed. Ten single supplier contracts for a total sum of up to £41,628,334 have now been awarded. The operators will commence operations from 1 October 2023 for an initial period of five years with an option to be extend the contract for further two years.

4.8 We have also commenced the procurement for the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Services Framework for the delivery of the Taxicard services from September 2024.

4.9   Similar to DAR, Taxicard, has remained stable since April 2022. When compared to the previous year's data for the months of (October 2022 - April 2023), there is a slight seven per cent decrease in demand for Taxicard service.

4.10   Taxicard performance has generally been good, with 98 per cent of trips being met within 15 minutes of the scheduled time between October 2022 to April 2023

4.11   Capital Call service increased by six per cent between October 2022 and April 2023, compared to the same period last year. Furthermore, we saw an overall four per cent growth in demand in fiscal year 2023 compared to fiscal year 2022.

Booking and scheduling platform

4.12   Central to the delivery of the ATS Strategy is the introduction of a one-stop shop booking system, and in support of this we have now procured Via technologies who will be providing a new booking and scheduling system. This system will allow customers the ability to book DaR services using an online portal alongside a telephone option.

4.13   We are working with Via Technologies to formulate a transition plan which includes colleague training, user testing and customer and stakeholder engagement.

4.14   The new system is expected to be fully operational by November 2023; three months prior to the previously programmed deadline of January 2024.

Travel Mentoring Service

4.15   The Travel Mentoring team is now undertaking face-to-face work.

4.16   Individual journey assistance and group activities, such as bus days (build confidence and knowledge in using the bus network ahead of children moving to secondary school), have now restarted.

4.17   We are retaining some of the new methods of working introduced during the pandemic and are offering video or telephone assistance to customers. Although most people prefer the in-person approach, it's important to offer digital alternatives when requested.

4.18   ''Train the trainer' sessions have also restarted. These are designed to assist staff at organisations such as clubs and residences to provide advice to their residents and customers on independent travel. Our Travel Mentoring team will meet with staff at these organisations and walk them through all the travel options available to disabled people and those with other mobility impairments. We will also provide coaching on how to assist their customers with their travel needs in a positive, supportive way.

5   ATS Roadmap updates

5.1   At the last meeting we shared the ATS Strategy and Roadmap and we have been establishing a programme of work to support its delivery.

5.2   Appendix 1 includes the updated Roadmap for review.

5.3   A steering group is being established to drive this work forwards across TfL and will be supported by a working group to manage project delivery.

6   Next Steps

6.1   Over the next six months, we will start work on the list of projects identified in the refreshed ATS Roadmap.

6.2   Part of this will be ensuring the new booking and scheduling system is optimised to deliver the best possible customer experience and operational efficiencies.

6.3   Given TfL's current financial position, the initial focus will be on those projects that have been identified as deliverable at low cost and within the shorter-term.

6.4   We will bring an update on this work to the next meeting and progress updates will continue to be provided every six months.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: The journey towards the vision for a world class Assisted Transport Services – December 2022

List of Background Papers:

None

Contact Officer: Louise Cheeseman, Director of Bus Operations
Email: LouiseCheeseman@tfl.gov.uk

Appendix 1 The journey towards the vision for world class Assisted Transport Services – (December 2022)

Overview of the Assisted Transport Strategy

Purpose	Deliver reliable and convenient Assisted Transport service for older and disabled Londoners

Vision	World-leading Assisted Transport service provision by 2032

TfL Values	Caring	Open	Adaptable

Objectives	1. Improve and integrate the end to end customer experience	2. Improve TfL's understanding of the Assisted Transport market	3. Increase awareness of the choices available to customers	4. Optimise capacity and make best use of available funding

Underpinned by the:

MTS Principles	Safe and reliable	Integrated	Convenience	Flexibility and choice	Innovative
	Customer focused, highly trained staff	Multi model and seamless, single user platform, personalised account	Information and support to build confidence in independent travelling and journey planning	Between modes, times of travel, ways of booking, level of assistance	Using innovation in bookings, payments, service routing, customer and performance monitoring

The Assisted Transport Strategy Roadmap

Key: ☐ = open actions, ☐ = closed actions

As each initiative is developed the roadmap will be updated with specific timescales for delivery. The current short / medium / long-term estimates are indicative until further research and project planning is undertaken. Where known specific timescales are included.

ATS Objective	ATS Roadmap Categories	Details of initiative	Timescales Short / Medium / Long-term	Estimated financial cost Low / Medium / High	Status – June 2023
Improve and integrate the end-to-end customer experience	**1. Application and joining**	Simplifying the application process and eligibility criteria to reduce barriers to customers applying. Looking at options for third parties to be able to refer customers who may benefit from our services.	Short - Medium	Medium	We are reviewing the membership forms and optimising processes to ensure consistency with the implementation of new booking system.
	2. Booking and scheduling	Simplifying the booking process through the introduction of a new booking and scheduling system. Once introduced to undertake further work to maximise the opportunities the new system offers to e.g., facilitating interchanges between the accessible wider public transport network and ATS services so customers can travel further independently.	Short- Medium	High	The new booking and scheduling process will be introduced in November 2023.

	3. One-stop shop	Integrating third parties with our booking and scheduling system to create a single point of contact for customers to book journeys across London.	Long	Medium	A long-term aim as this will require working with multiple agencies across London to explore the feasibility and likelihood of achievability.
	4. Online tools	Improvements to our website and online tools such as journey planning to make accessing information easier and clarify our service options.	Short - Long	Medium	The existing customer interface will be updated as part of the new booking portal.
	5. Staff training and upskilling	Review of current training scope and opportunities to integrate our training and improve our customer service offering.	Medium	Medium	Project plan to be developed and aligned with implementation of new booking system. We have now rolled out of a new 'Train the Trainer' programme to support staff training and onboarding new system.
Improve TfL's understanding of the Assisted Transport	6. Best practice and benchmarking	Benchmarking with other Assisted Transport providers and across other ambassador / support services to understand where we can make further improvements or changes to	Short - Medium	Low - Medium	Project plan to be developed and underway by mid-2023.

market		our offering to benefit customers.			
	7. Data and research	Analysis of journey patterns across Assisted Transport modes to inform future planning, overlaying customer research to improve understanding of customer ambitions and needs from ATS.	Medium	Low - Medium	Project plan to be developed and underway by mid-2023.
Increase awareness of the choices available to customers	8. Communication and stakeholder engagement	Development of a communication plan including public forum and disability group engagement to share strategy initiatives, service improvements and gather feedback to feed into planned ATS roadmap initiatives.	Short - Medium	Low	A communication plan to share updates about upcoming changes is being developed in conjunction with internal teams.
	9. Customer training and upskilling	Support for customers to develop skills and confidence in using other modes alongside ATS where appropriate and to improve their understanding of wider network accessibility improvements.	Medium – Long	Medium	Project plan to be developed by mid-2023.
	10. Marketing and promotion	Improving awareness of the range of ATS options and introducing targeted messaging to support different customer needs.	Short – Medium	Low – Medium	A communication plan to share updates about upcoming changes is being developed in conjunction with internal teams.
	11. Travel mentoring	Increasing awareness of travel mentoring, reviewing how travel mentoring is offered and delivered to maximise benefits for customers and reach the maximum number of	Medium - Long	Medium	Project plan to be developed and underway by mid-2023.

		people who need this support.			
Optimise capacity and make best use of available funding	**12. Making the best use of available funding**	Reviewing processes to improve resource use e.g., removing duplicative processes between AT, identifying process improvements to maximise customer benefits. Currently underway is the Taxicard harmonisation project which looks to ensure equability and harmonisation of the scheme offering across London.	Medium – Long	Low - Medium	Some initiatives already underway with a full project plan to be developed and underway by mid-2023.
	13. Optimising capacity	Our data and research findings will look to open up new avenues to explore in this area.	Medium – Long	TBC once research is completed	Project plan to be developed once findings from the data and research workstream are established.