

Taxi with attendant services – Summary of options for the way forward

This table sets out the different options for providing taxis, passenger attendants and accessible vehicles for:

- home to school taxi provision for students with SEND (the biggest use of the current taxi framework)
- transport for vulnerable adult clients attending medical appointments, respite centres, specialist centres and day centres
- Council officers book taxis for council related business journeys to support residents where public transport is not a suitable option

| Option | Description | Opportunities | Risks/Issues | Timelines to achieve |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1. In source taxis | The council directly run taxi services buying new vehicles, recruiting, and employing drivers, passenger assistants centrally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA has direct control of routes and pricing • Enhanced terms and conditions for staff • The service could be more tightly controlled with early identification of issues • In sourced provision could be traded • Any surplus made could be re-invested | <p>More expensive option (see exempt appendix for costs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant investment to purchase or hire a range of saloon cars, MPV's and multi seater minibuses £3 million • Significant revenue costs for additional staffing, storage, charging, maintenance, and repairs. £3 million • Additional capacity needed to set up service and recruit 130 additional staff (drivers, assistants, and admin staff) • Additional pressure on Fleet & Transport team including vehicle maintenance and driver compliance monitoring • Purchase of up to 70 electric vehicles (Mini buses, MPV's and Saloon cars) through capital funds. <p>Staffing risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current shortage of drivers makes recruitment challenging • Maintaining adequate levels of staff to run the service • Should demand fall then the council may have to make redundancies. <p>Other risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council holds full liability for safety and quality of the service • The LA does not have expertise in this area • Current IT systems are not able to capable support running taxis. • In house provision could only be an extension of current SEND provision and would not be able to support ad hoc and out of hours work. | <p>2 -3 years estimate before the service was fully operational.</p> <p>Timescale informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement process to purchase vehicles • Procurement of IT System • New arrangements for parking, storage, and maintenance of vehicles • Recruitment to new posts • Training staff <p>The LA would still need to procure taxis in the short term (see options 3-7 below)</p> |
| 2. Development of a wider in-house transport assistance offer | <p>Develop alternative modes of transport assistance including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel buddies for walking journeys under 2 miles and supporting the use of public transport • Independent Travel Training (ITT) for Post 16 home school transport • Increasing the use of direct payments (PTBs) to families so they can pay their own fares, fuel, cabs. | <p>This reflects the LAs current strategic approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health benefits for students walking • Environmental benefits by less use of taxis and buses • Students are supported to be more independent, with improved life skills • A reduction of future costs to the Islington Learning Disability Partnership team and Adult Social Care. • May avoid the need to increase number of ACT buses to meet increased demand for home to school transport | <p>More expensive option as new services are developed.</p> <p>Travel Buddies risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining adequate levels of staff to run the service • Should demand fall then the council may have to make redundancies. <p>Personal budgets and direct payments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incur more administrative overheads and will require additional council staff when they go above 100 • families pay their own fuel; cabs still have an environmental impact <p>Travel training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to enforce travel training or PTB option for 0–15-year-olds as families must opt in. <p>Taxis</p> | <p>2- 5 years estimate before the full scale of these services are fully operational.</p> <p>The use of direct payments has been increasing and are demonstrating a financial savings.</p> <p>A travel training pilot is already underway to inform future.</p> <p>Models for travel buddies are being researched.</p> <p>The LA would still need to use taxis both in the short term (see options 3-7 below)</p> |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxis remain part of the transport offer but are used less frequently. | |
| 3. Extend existing taxi framework by 12 months | Negotiate the current joint framework with Camden and City of London and extend for 12 months | The only advantage it would give would be to allow us more time to look at other options. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden and the city are not planning to extend it by 12 months Work is underway to re tender for 4 years from 1/9/23. This would still be a key decision and would have to go through CMB and Exec Board. | Not possible. |
| 4. Use an existing third-party framework agreement | Islington ask to join an existing framework or DPS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared taxi rounds reduce costs Shared contract management Standard terms and conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers tend to be bigger national providers rather than local. Reduction in social value as taxi companies likely to use fewer local staff | <p>Unknown timescales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are too late to join the Hackney framework. The only opportunity we know of is the joint Camden / city one. |
| 5. A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) | Moving from a framework agreement model to a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers a similar arrangement to a framework. Flexibility to allow new providers to be added so helping to maintain capacity if other providers drop out DPS operating in some other LAs has been shown to save money Increases the likelihood of innovative practice from new suppliers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No neighbouring borough currently has the available resources and suitable system to support a fully electronic DPS at this point. More procurement capacity needed to assess new applicants. May require more capacity in ACT to manage and monitor more contracts. Quality control can be harder to maintain across more providers. Operators can potentially join the DPS from any part of the country negating the benefits of keeping business local. | <p>1 ½ years estimate</p> <p>We would need time to explore the use of the DPS system (ADAM) used by Islington.</p> |
| 6. Taxi framework Islington only | Straightforward taxi framework contract to spot purchase taxis as a single LA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially a smaller number of providers to manage Limits number of firms making coordination easier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few contractors signing up meaning we can't meet our statutory duty Overreliance on a fixed group of providers compared to a DPS Increased costs as LA loses the benefit of shared taxis with other LAs More contract management needed compared to a shared Framework or DPS | <p>This could potentially be in place for from 1/9/2023.</p> <p>Could be delays as Islington would need to pick up the procurement work currently being led by Camden.</p> |
| 7. Joint taxi framework with other LA(s) | Work in partnership with other LAs so that taxi rounds and routes going to the same schools/ colleges can be shared where possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains current arrangement with Camden and City of London Shared taxi rounds reduce costs Shared contract management Working in partnership to find resolutions More likely to provide consistency for SEND passengers | Risks are as for 6 above | This could in place from 1/9/2023 |

Recommended option(s)

The proposed way forward is:

- To continue the current strategy as outlined in **Option 2** - Development of a wider in-house transport assistance offer.
If we want to accelerate the pace of this strategy, we could make a business case for
 - the development of additional capacity to manage more PTBs
 - recruitment of Travel Buddies within ACT
 - the development of an in-house Travel Training Service
- To pursue **Option 7** Joint taxi framework with other LA(s) as this is considered to be the most timely and cost effective option.