

# Committee: Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Team

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

Agenda item: 7

Wards:

## **Subject: Update on community transport task group review**

Lead officer: Cormac Stokes, Head of Street Scene and Waste

Lead member: Councillor Linda Kirby, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Stella Akintan; [stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk](mailto:stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk)

---

### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Panel comments on the updates on implementing the recommendations from the task group review of community transport
  - B. That the Panel decides if further updates on this review are required
- 

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The attached action plan sets out the progress with implementing the recommendations from the task group review of community transport.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. In 2009/10 the Panel conducted a review of the council's community transport service. The recommendations aimed to improve the communication with service users and carers, and to promote flexibility in the use of existing resources.
- 2.2. Cabinet considered the report in September 2010 and an action plan was developed. The action plan has recently been updated and is attached at **Appendix A.**

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. Overview and Scrutiny Panels are free to determine their work programmes as they see fit and can therefore choose which issues to take into account when drawing up scrutiny work programmes.

## **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. None specific to this report

## **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Scrutiny Review of Merton Council's Community Service. March 2010.

## **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. Progress against the action plan requires input from a number of people. There are no additional resource implications

- 7**            **LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1.        None specific to this report
- 8**            **HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1.        None specific to this report
- 9**            **CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1.        None specific to this report
- 10**          **RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
- 10.1.      None specific to this report
- 11**          **APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- Appendix A
- 12**          **BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 12.1.      None

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key recommendations have emerged from the review:-

Rec No	Recommendation	To be actioned by:	Comments	Timeframe
1	That effective channels of communication be maintained between drivers and clients, so that in the event of delay in picking up clients, they are made aware of the delay and the likely revised pick-up time	Merton Transport Service	Merton Transport Services comments: Mobile phones are issued to all drivers with passenger contact details to ensure effective communication can be maintained. This will be further emphasised to all staff involved. ===== February 2012 update:  All Transport staff is issued with Mobile phones. This has enhanced the communication aspects of the service both ways between the staff in Transport, the Day Centres and our clients.	In place and working
2	That the rotas for picking up and dropping off clients at day centres be rotated periodically, to make the system fairer and to share the burden of time spent on the vehicles and time missed at day centres.	Merton Transport Service	Merton Transport Services comments: Routes are put together on the basis of overall minimum journey time and logical pick up order, passengers and carers also require a regular pick up time to plan their commitments. Route variance is kept to a minimum unless a complete review is required. The rotas can be rearranged but to reduce journey times will require additional	Under review subject to personalised budgets.

			<p>resources that will lead to reduced vehicle optimisation and increased cost.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update:</p> <p>We always attempt to get our clients to the Day Centres on time and in most cases this does happen. When there are any issues with us getting clients to the Day Centre we always keep the Day Centre staff informed. Logistically we always plan the routes in the most efficient manner. We use our route planning software KL2 with the added knowledge that our supervisors have about the routes to ensure the routes are planned and executed to meet our schedule. We also have to take into consideration our clients needs, so that they have stable pickup and drop off times and do not stay on the vehicles longer than the recommend times.</p>	
3	<p>That Merton Transport Service investigates the potential for drivers and vehicles to be offered during the daytime to Merton's day centres in order for day trips to be resumed.</p>	Merton Transport Service	<p>Merton Transport Services comments: Drivers and vehicles can be made available subject to requirements but there will be marginal costing (fuel).</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update:</p>	<p>Available</p> <p>=====</p> <p>The advertising element of the</p>

	<p>JMC Day Centre regularly uses our vehicles for planned day trips. All Saints, High Path and Eastways Day Centres use our vehicles every now and then. We realise that a bigger push needs to be made on our part to sell our service to maximise the use of our vehicles and in an attempt to do this. Regular meetings with the Day Centre Managers are being arranged. With the first meeting scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2012. We are also working on a leaflet at the moment that advertises our service in an effort to push the service we provide.</p>	<p>service is subject to completing the research on the leaflet, getting it designed and printed.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>That clients' concerns about impending personalised budgets be acknowledged and that strong advice, guidance and support be on hand when these are introduced, in order to help people make informed choices and decisions about the services they purchase.</p>	<p>Merton Adult Services</p> <p>The intention is to include transport services within the personalised budgets. We are working with Merton Transport to confirm costs so that we can incorporate this information to the clients when calculating their budgets. The advice, guidance and support will be provided by information centre which is part of the Access and Assessment Team.</p> <p>Merton Transport Service comments We are working C&amp; H to identify individual costs.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update:</p> <p>=====</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>Regular communications with Head of Direct Provision providing budgetary information whenever it is needed. Financial and vehicle utilisation information in relation to the 'Ageing Well in Merton project' also provided. Information also provided with respect to alternative ways to maximise vehicle efficiency in order to make budgetary savings for his area..</p>		
5	<p>That, in order to ensure full social inclusion with regard to the transport service provided by the Council, a proper protocol on use of seatbelt extensions is established as part of health and safety policy, so that advice an guidance on use of seatbelt extensions is applied consistently and operated to the benefit of service users.</p>	<p>Merton Transport Service</p>	<p>Merton Transport Services comments</p> <p>A proper protocol already exists a risk assessments was carried out and specialist equipment obtained to ensure passenger safety.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update:</p> <p>We do not use seat belt extensions at Merton Transport Passenger Operations. As we are not aware of any that have been crash tested and they often cause the diagonal belt to be poorly routed. Seat belt extensions are also not necessary as modern seat belts are longer and cater for most large passengers. In exceptional circumstances (where the passenger is bariatric) we have successfully used a wheelchair passenger restraint. These have</p>
			<p>In place</p>

			<p>been crash tested and are fully adjustable to ensure safe routing of belts across hips and shoulder.</p>	
6	<p>That clear lines of accountability and regular monitoring of the service are established, to ensure an effective service is delivered and strong customer service skills are in evidence.</p>	<p>Merton Transport Service</p>	<p>Merton Transport Services comments This would appear to confirm the requirement for the previous SLA meetings with C&amp;H and Transport Services to be resumed =====</p> <p>February 2012 update:  Regular formal SLA meetings now established. A survey to our service users recently carried out (not previously undertaken by MTS). The survey was sent out to all Day Centre Managers at the beginning of January 2012. Completed surveys received from the six Day Centres and will be meeting with the managers next week to discuss action points learnt from the survey, and how we will not only put them into action but monitor how the actions are progressing as well.</p> <p>The driver/escort combination is the key to communication and now carry mobile phones to communicate with carers regarding delays or other changes. Some carers prefer to communicate via the depot</p>	<p>To be arranged asap when members of team are identified =====</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
7	<p>That a comprehensive system for sharing information between carers, drivers, escorts and day centre staff is developed, to help keep carers and clients up to date</p>	<p>Merton Transport Service/Merton Adult Service</p>		<p>Subject to onboard GPS equipment be purchased and fitted should e in</p>

			<p>or day centre to inform of changes.</p> <p>Merton Transport Services comments Mobile phones have been in use for some time and Transport Services are investigating further means of onboard communication.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update: We have looked at onboard GPS equipment in the past and had 3 quotes from various companies that dealt with this sort of equipment but, it came to a stand still due to financial restraints. We have started to look at this sort on equipment again in order to improve our service delivery. We are still in the early stages of doing this at this present time.</p>	<p>place by end of current financial year 2010/11</p> <p>=====</p> <p>3 months</p>
8	That there should be continuity in the use of escorts wherever possible and that the potential for using day centre staff as escorts be explored.	Merton Transport Service/Merton Adult Services	<p>No progress in terms of changing current arrangements. However staff at centres do act in this capacity when requested if escorts are not available. Provider staff would need to change terms and conditions for this to be a more regular activity; however this can happen if Transport services feel this to be worthwhile.</p> <p>Merton Transport Services comments The use of escorts is a matter for review and where possible Merton Transport Services</p>	Ongoing



9	That, in order to reflect the important role that escorts fulfil, disability awareness training is made mandatory for all escorts and that their training provides them with the tools to tailor the service to the users' needs.	Merton Transport Service	<p>will use day centre staff.</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update: JMC, Woodlands and Eastway Day Centres use their own Escorts who work as a team with our drivers to ensure we are providing a good quality of service delivery to all our clients.</p>	
			<p>Merton Transport Services comments</p> <p>Disability awareness is part of escorts training including a number of specialism's</p> <p>=====</p> <p>February 2012 update:</p> <p>We have just purchased new restraints that enable us to strap down and carry Mobility Scooters on our vehicles. Our Health &amp; Safety Manager is also developing a slight extension of the WTORS ( Wheelchair Tie down &amp; Occupant Restraint System) training to encompass this addition to our service. Therefore all staff and any new staff will be trained to use these new restraints. Before they use them on our vehicles</p>	<p>In place and being developed</p> <p>=====</p> <p>Will be in place shortly</p>

10	That consideration be given to examining the merits of undertaking a competitive tendering process with regard to the council's transport service.	Environment and Regeneration Department	Merton Transport Services comments The service will be market tested and competitively tendered where appropriate. February 2012 update: Procurement of Framework completed. This covers taxi, minibuses and coaches. Currently securing prices for all taxi routes.	In discussion with consultant who carried out review as to best way forward.
11	That work should be undertaken to develop stronger links and channels of communication between Merton Transport Services and different local transport providers with the aim of maximising use of resources and improving community transport provision for users.	Merton Transport Service	Merton Transport Services comments We already work with a number of local providers but we are frequently competing for the same work at the same time. Stronger links will be established with local transport providers ===== February 2012 update: We are in the process of working on stronger links with Merton Community Transport (MCT). At the moment we are talking with Fitzroy Dawson the Chief Executive of MCT looking at the following: vehicle utilisation to ascertain how we may identify areas where closer cooperation might take place passenger fleet use for a working day. possibility of using volunteer drivers as we use temporary drivers on a regular basis look at the possibility of using MCT drivers if Manpower can not meet our need when we require a temp driver	Ongoing  ===== Ongoing

12	That the Merton Transport Service Manager establishes a dialogue with local NHS trusts, to explore ways to maximise the sharing of transport resources to benefit patients, particularly during periods of peak demand and activity.	Merton Transport Service Manager	Merton Transport Services comments There have been numerous attempts to engage wit the PCT without success any assistance in this area is appreciated. We shall continue to explore these opportunities ===== February 2012 update: Ongoing	Ongoing  ===== Ongoing
13	That the review report be forwarded to Link Merton, with a request that the Link considers engaging with local hospitals' non-urgent patient transport units, in order to develop channels of communication and develop closer working	Scrutiny Team		
14	That this scrutiny review report and the external review report are considered by Cabinet at the same time, to ensure there is an inclusive approach to the outcomes of both pieces of work.	Cabinet	Merton Transport Services The TAS report will be reported to Cabinet for information February 2012 update: Completed	Actioned

The Healthier Communities and Older People Scrutiny Panel will monitor progress with implementation of these recommendations, subject to acceptance by the Executive in 2010.