

# London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee

## Freedom Pass Progress Report      Item No: 08

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**Summary:** This report provides Members with a general progress update on the Freedom Pass scheme.

**Recommendations:** Members are asked to:

- Approve the recommendation to shut the renewal portal and phone line when new customer service enhancements to the Freedom Pass website are launched.; and
- Note the updated timescales for the Freedom Pass and Taxicard managed service contract re-let.

### 2016 Re-issue Progress Update

#### Introduction

1. The following section provides a progress update on the 2016 Freedom Pass re-issue as of 31 August 2016. On 31 March 2016 139,517 Older Person, 29,049 Disabled Person and 1,102 Discretionary Disabled Person Freedom Passes expired. Older person passholders received a letter asking them to renew either on line or by post. Disabled person passholders and discretionary disabled person pass holders were reassessed by boroughs and if still eligible received their 2021 passes without having to complete a renewal process.
2. The Renewal was overseen by a project board that met monthly between September 2015 and June 2016. The board is made up of representatives from:
  - the London boroughs;
  - London Councils' transport and mobility and communications teams;
  - Transport for London (TfL);

- Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC);
  - Association of Chief Librarians;
  - Transport for All;
  - Age UK London; and
  - ESP Systex and Journeycall.
3. The final board meeting was held in June to review successes of the re-issue and lessons learned in order to improve future re-issues.

### **Older Persons Freedom Pass Renewal**

4. The older person's renewal progressed well, with 78% completing their renewal by 31 March 2016. This is four per cent lower than at the same time in 2015. As of 31 August 2016 a further five per cent have renewed (83%). 79% have renewed on line and 21% using paper application forms.
5. Appendix 1 sets out progress to date in graphical format and Appendix 2 sets out progress in each of the boroughs. Members are asked to note two matters highlighted by these documents.
6. Renewal rates have slowed significantly and are now no more than in the tens daily (compared with thousands before the renewal deadline). Therefore, officers consider that the renewal portal and phone line should be closed and any further renewals dealt with through the replacement pass process (without the £10 replacement charge).
7. Officers recommend that the cut-off date should be set to coincide with the launch of the new online service for card replacements and account creation by the end of October.

### **Disabled Persons Freedom Pass renewal**

8. The renewal of Disabled Person Freedom Pass holders is the responsibility of the local authority. Local authorities checked residency and confirmed continued eligibility of their pass holders against the Transport Act 2000 criteria. A total of 19,709 have been re-issued (65.37%). The renewal rate is lower, as boroughs have re-assessed eligibility and some passholders have been deemed no longer to be eligible.

### **Costs of the 2016 re-issue**

9. The total forecast costs of the 2016 re-issue is £437,000. This is lower than the original £500,000 estimate because of lower than estimated renewal rates (the budget was based on a conservative estimate of 90% pass holders renewing).

### **Conclusions and Lessons Learnt**

10. The following paragraphs set out some general conclusions about the renewal and consider improvements that can be made to specific areas of the service for future renewals.
11. Using objective measures regarding time and cost, officers consider that the 2016 renewal project was a success. Every eligible member that tried to renew their pass by the deadline was able to do so and received a replacement. The project was also delivered under budget.
12. Feedback received from people that renewed was overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents that completed an on-line survey of their experiences said that the renewal process was 'easy' or 'very easy'. Furthermore, London Councils only received 10

complaints from pass holders (a 0.009% rate). These were predominantly regarding issues with the delivery of passes.

13. Nevertheless, stakeholders have made a number of recommendations to further improve future renewals. London Councils will consider the following for future renewals.
  - Project board: Introduce video conferencing facilities to improve communication with remote board members.
  - Method of contact: Initial reminders to passholders to be sent by email, rather than post to reduce costs.
  - Web portal and card management system: Increase visibility of online transactions to the customer contact centre to enable real time tracking of passes as they move through the production centre to improve the customer experience.
  - Disabled person renewals: Where necessary, boroughs to ensure communications to renewers clearly sets out the process. Introduce on-line renewal facility for disabled passholders.

### **New Customer Service Improvements**

14. In June 2016, London Councils reported on a number of improvements that will be made to its online service. Namely, allowing passholders to create on-line accounts and make on-line payments for replacement Freedom Passes. These improvements are intended to bring a number of benefits. They will allow customers to transact with London Councils online, making their experience quicker and easier. And in the longer term, they will allow London Councils to realise savings in administering the scheme.
15. The work is being delivered in two phases. Phase one, replacement passes, is currently in testing by London Councils officers. And phase two, account creation, will follow on once testing of phase one is complete. It is anticipated that the improvements will be released to the public by the end of October 2016.

### **Freedom Pass Managed Service – Contract Re-Let**

16. On 23 March 2016, TEC gave London Councils approval to retender the following contracted out services in relation to the Freedom Pass and Taxicard schemes:
  - Electronic data capture of member details
  - Application data validation
  - Card management
  - Card production;
  - Customer support (Optional for Taxicard)
17. The tender documents were published on the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and its national equivalent, Contracts Finder, on 21 September 2016. This was slightly later than originally planned due to other commitments, namely, preparing London Councils' bid for the Road User Charging Adjudicators re-tender and on-going work with TfL regarding the future of social needs transport. The table below sets out the revised timetable for the tender exercise.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Finish</b>	<b>Duration</b>
OJEU Notice Published – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) launched	21/09/2016	21/10/2016	31 days
Deadline for the receipt of PQQs	21/10/2016	12 noon	n/a
Assessment of PQQs	24/10/2016	11/11/2016	19 days
Notification of PQQ assessment	17/11/2016	17/11/2016	1 day
Issue of invitation to tender (ITT)	21/11/2016	21/11/2016	1 day
Deadline for clarification of questions		17/01/2017	n/a
Deadline for the receipt of tenders	24/01/2017	12 noon	n/a
Initial assessment of tenders	25/01/2017	08/02/2017	15 days
Provider visits / interviews	20/02/2017	24/02/2017	5 days
Final evaluation of tenders	27/02/2017	03/03/2017	5 days
Transport and Environment Committee considers officer recommendations	16/03/2017		
Contract awarded and letter sent for the successful bidder	17/03/2017	17/03/2017	1 day
Standstill period between notification of results of procurement and signing of contract	17/03/2017	26/03/2017	10 days
Contract signed	03/04/2017	03/04/2017	1 day
Mobilisation period	03/04/2017	02/10/2017	125 days

## **Financial Implications for London Councils**

The Director of Corporate resources reports that a sum of £362,000 of the total £437,000 forecast cost of the 2016 re-issue was charged to the 2015/16 Freedom Pass budget of £1.518 million. The estimated residual cost of £75,000 will be met from the 2016/17 budget, of £1.518 million also. The total final cost for the re-issue is therefore expected to be well within the £500,000 approved estimate and forms part of the overall projected underspend of £503,000 as at 30 June (Month 3) reported to the TEC Executive Sub-Committee in September. The position at the half-year stage will be reported to the Sub-Committee in November.

## **Equalities Implications for London Councils**

The new developments will be built using principles that have previously been user tested by Freedom Pass holders. Therefore, London Councils and ESP are confident that the new developments will be accessible to all users. Features include self help videos and layout optimisation for blind and partially sighted people.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

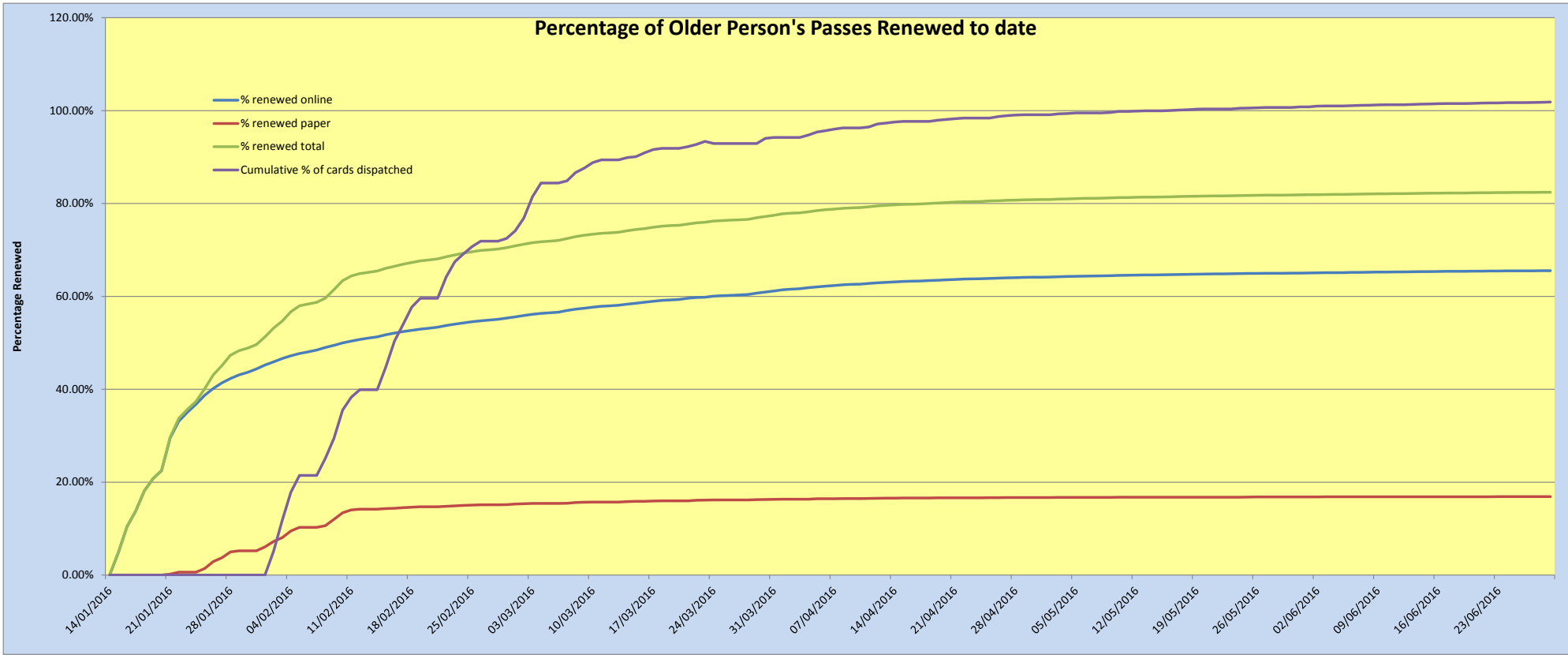
- Approve the recommendation to shut the renewal portal and phone line when new customer service enhancements to the Freedom Pass website are launched; and
- Note the updated timescales for the Freedom Pass and Taxicard managed service contract re-let.

## **Background Papers**

TEC – Freedom Pass Progress Report – 23 March 2016 (Item 10)

TEC – Freedom Pass Progress Report – 16 June 2016 (Item 14)

Appendix 1.



## Appendix 2 (Agenda Item 8). Renewal Borough Renewal Rates

<b>Borough</b>	<b>Total % Passes Renewed</b>	<b>Number of Older Person Passes Expired in 2016</b>
<b>Havering</b>	88.60%	4703
<b>Camden</b>	88.40%	4260
<b>Bexley</b>	88.30%	4463
<b>Bromley</b>	86.57%	6484
<b>Hillingdon</b>	86.16%	4763
<b>Richmond upon Thames</b>	85.85%	4212
<b>Harrow</b>	85.55%	5739
<b>Barnet</b>	85.26%	7301
<b>Redbridge</b>	85.03%	4982
<b>Enfield</b>	84.92%	5306
<b>Croydon</b>	84.33%	6648
<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	84.10%	2371
<b>Kingston upon Thames</b>	83.37%	3054
<b>Greenwich</b>	83.28%	4048
<b>Sutton</b>	83.00%	3577
<b>Merton</b>	82.71%	3516
<b>Hammersmith and Fulham</b>	82.51%	2825
<b>Hounslow</b>	82.50%	4481
<b>Ealing</b>	82.28%	6090
<b>Islington</b>	82.18%	3115
<b>Wandsworth</b>	82.13%	4332
<b>City of London</b>	81.94%	216
<b>Lewisham</b>	81.47%	3901
<b>Brent</b>	81.45%	5455
<b>Lambeth</b>	80.60%	4046
<b>Haringey</b>	80.58%	3980
<b>Southwark</b>	80.37%	3806
<b>Kensington and Chelsea</b>	80.20%	3708
<b>Waltham Forest</b>	80.11%	4053
<b>Hackney</b>	80.04%	3061
<b>Tower Hamlets</b>	77.90%	2710
<b>Newham</b>	77.39%	3800
<b>City of Westminster</b>	76.61%	4511
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.24%</b>	<b>139,517</b>

\* The total number of cards expiring is greater than the total number of letters posted because this table includes cards renewed in the London Borough of Camden who did not write to pass holders but undertook internal verification of residency details.