

Title: Insourcing of Travel Buddies for SEND Young People

Report

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1. Describe the issue under consideration:

1.1 This paper reports on work to evaluate the Council's travel buddy service and seeks approval for the creation of an inhouse team in line with the Council's Insourcing Policy.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction:

2.1 The Travel Buddies service is an integral part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transport Service. This team of 62 staff provide daily support for young people with special needs, escorting them in travelling to and from school to develop with the aim of enabling students to travel independently. It is highly regarded by parents and schools.

2.2 This report asks colleagues to approve the insourcing of this service which will ensure the staff are on local authority terms and conditions; have permanent contracts and are paid the LLW. This is very positive for the staff, and will contribute to the new service delivery model developing in SEN. The work to insource this team has been conducted in accordance with Haringey's Insourcing Policy as set out in the report.

3. Recommendations:

3.1 That Cabinet approves the insourcing of the Council's travel buddies service from the current interim DPS arrangement brought about by the withdrawal of services from the previous provider.

3.2 That the service be brought inhouse before September 1st 2021 to coincide with the new academic year.

4. Reasons for decision:

4.1 The Haringey special educational needs and disability (SEND) School Transport Service provides an important service to children, young people, and their families. One important part of this service is our travel buddy team who

are responsible for accompanying children with special educational needs to their place of learning with the goal of promoting independent travel.

- 4.2 Until June 2020, the travel buddy service was facilitated by an external provider. Due to emerging concerns about COVID, and the future viability of the service, at that time of the UK's first national lockdown the provider informed the Council that they no longer wished to continue providing the service.
- 4.3 In order to preserve the service and to provide continuity for affected children, Haringey promptly committed to keeping all our 62 travel buddies employed via an interim framework facilitated by Procurement colleagues under a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) arrangement.
- 4.4 It was acknowledged from the outset that this DPS arrangement would be a temporary measure while a full commissioning review of suitable options for the future travel buddy service was undertaken. That commissioning process was subsequently carried out in line with the measures set out in the Council's Insourcing Policy.
- 4.5 Haringey's Insourcing Policy was approved and adopted by Cabinet in October 2019. The Insourcing Policy includes a commitment to a structured approach to support sustained progress on this agenda by:
- making it easier for us to work collaboratively with our communities in the design and delivery of public services which reflect what they need, recognising that service delivery is a core element of our relationship with residents.
 - strengthening our organisational sustainability and resilience, by further developing the skills and knowledge of our workforce; and our organisational capacity and infrastructure.
 - increasing the numbers of locally employed people who will benefit from the excellent terms and conditions we offer as an employer.
 - opening services to increased scrutiny and accountability to drive improved outcomes; and,
 - squeezing the maximum financial and social value from each pound spent.
- 4.6 Bringing travel buddies inhouse will lead to a new operating model and potential future alignments with existing teams within the SEN service. The Council will have more control over the new inhouse service and will be able to manage staff to the same standards as other colleagues within the Children's Services directorate.
- 4.7 As part of the proposed transition process, it was recognised that any decision to bring Travel Buddies inhouse would be a significant change for staff who were self-employed under the previous external provider and maintain that status

under the DPS arrangement. In order to ensure a collaborative approach and successful co-production of an improved inhouse operating model, the SEND service and project team undertook a thorough and meaningful consultation with Travel buddies over a six-week period in November and December of 2020.

- 4.8 The consultation took the form of group consultation and individual conversations with all 62 travel buddies to set out the rationale behind the inhouse and to get their opinions on how we move forward with the service. The results of a confidential online survey were overwhelmingly positive in favour of a move towards an inhouse with 92% of respondees confirming that they wished to transfer to direct employment with Haringey.
- 4.9 Haringey’s approach to Community Wealth Building puts an emphasis on the Council using all its available levers to build the prosperity of local people and communities economically, through employment, and socially, with an emphasis on those who are working in lower-paid employment.
- 4.10 A future inhouse service represents a significant improvement in the social value calculator contained in the Enabling Framework set out in Appendix 1. Over 80% of the current travel buddy workforce live in the borough and the remainder live in neighbouring boroughs. Rather than paying substantial management costs and fees to an external travel provider, we will invest in locally based staff whilst allowing them to benefit from Haringey’s excellent terms and conditions.
- 4.11 The inhouse service is achievable at a lower operating cost than the previous external spend.
- 4.12 The financial breakdown of the inhouse service, including the new full time equivalent management post, is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Financial Cost for inhouse Travel Buddies Service

Item	Value
Total cost per year per Travel Buddy inc. on-cost (SC1 pro-rata)	£8,960
Number of travel buddies	62
Total staff cost per academic year	£555,120
Total Annual Travel Allowance	£60,784
Assistant Travel Buddy Coordinator (inc. on-costs)	£25,137

Total Service Cost (per academic year)	£641,041
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- 4.13 This compares to the previous external spend of £664,810, which includes £233,890 of additional management and administrative fees.
- 4.14 The SEND transport budget is informed by demand for children who meet criteria to access support with transport. This budget has been under pressure over recent years resulting in an overspend. The SEND transport budget in 2019/20 was £4.08m and the spend totalled £5.30m. In 2020/21 the budget was £3.80m and the spend was £4.30m.
- 4.15 Lower expenditure within 2020-21 is attributed to reduced transport requirements as a result of schools and colleges being closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The travel buddy service was maintained wherever possible but a number of children were in the clinically and extremely vulnerable group (CEV) therefore unable to access provision on site due to shielding.
- 4.16 The SEND transport budget has been allocated growth in 2021/22 to meet the pressures in the service, resulting in a total budget of £4.6m. The inhouse model detailed above has added benefits of service improvement, improved experience for families, opportunity for further innovation and cross directorate working and should lead to a reduction of the SEND Transport budget overspend, longer term.

5. Alternative options considered:

- 5.1 **Maintain existing service externally** – this option does not deliver in terms of the Council's Insourcing Policy objectives. Third party provision of travel buddies does not provide a sufficient level of control to ensure that it is managed in line with Haringey's rigorous safeguarding standards. Market conditions do not provide significant assurances about LLW employment for travel buddies and did not deliver on either the affordability or the social value calculator contained within the Enabling Framework set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 **Service Provision through Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** – Various options have been explored in which part of the service was brought in-house, whilst other elements continued to be provided through third-party provision within both the commercial and the VCS sector. These options are set out in more detail in Appendix 1 and were not progressed because they did not provide sufficient assurances over the cohesive management and control of the service. A VCS option was discounted after initial investigation into the local market where a provider with the required capacity and child protection assurances could not be found.

6. **Background information**

- 6.1 The Travel Buddy service was introduced in Haringey to support the wider policy requirement of independence, personalisation, and self-reliance. This ensures all children, young people and adults are empowered to be as independent as possible.
- 6.2 Outcomes for children utilising the travel buddy service are recognised as positive. Testimony from children, parents and carers gathered at regular milestones by the travel buddy team has been positive. Children specifically have noted reduced levels of anxiety, better relationship building skills and a growing confidence towards independent travel over the course of time with a designated travel buddy.

7. **Contribution to Strategic Outcomes:**

- 7.1 This activity relates to the strategic priority where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential.
- 7.2 Haringey's SEND Transport policy has a stated aspiration to promote independence and to enable mobility for children, young people and adults with additional needs and disabilities who may not be able to access mainstream transport without assistance. An inhouse travel buddy team will promote and support wider policy imperatives of independence, personalisation, and self-reliance to ensure that children who required the service are empowered to be as independent as possible.
- 7.3 Haringey has recently published a Draft Walking and Cycling Action Plan (WCAP) for consultation to cover the years 2021- 2031. Two key aspirations within the WCAP are to promote walking and cycling as natural choices and to improve the wellbeing of residents. The new inhouse service will contribute to these outcomes by promoting both walking and cycling as beneficial independent travel choices for children who no longer require support from travel buddies and who are able to do so safely.
- 7.4 An inhouse travel buddy service has the potential to be utilised more flexibly across a wider range of Council services. A key Borough Plan commitment from Adult's Services is to strengthen and diversify support to the vulnerable adults including to enable people to improve living skills such as the ability to travel independently. With the relevant training to manage this potential service enhancement, travel buddies could be utilised to help deliver this organisational commitment.

8. Statutory Officers comments

8.1 Finance

8.1.1 The insourcing of the travel buddies is estimated to cost £0.641m per year as detailed in paragraph 4.12 of the report above. This estimated cost is less than providing the service externally at a cost of £0.665m per year. The insourcing model should lead to a reduction of the SEND Transport budget overspend in the longer term.

8.1.2 In consideration of the Council's LLW requirements, any future external provision that also factored in average industry management fees would result in a service spend of £0.80m.

8.2 Procurement

8.2.1 The Head of Procurement has been consulted on the preparation of this report and confirms there are no procurement related implications in agreeing the recommendations stated in Section 3 of this report.

8.3 Legal

8.3.1 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.3.2 The legal implication of insourcing the Council's travel buddy service is that this constitutes a Service Provision Change under the TUPE Regulations (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, as amended). As set out in the report, if the travel buddies are self-employed contractors, they are excluded from TUPE protections and their employment contracts will not automatically transfer to Haringey Council.

8.3.3 Haringey Council will not inherit the rights, responsibilities and liabilities related to the travel buddies' current employment contracts. The Council is within its right to employ the travel buddies on its more favourable terms and conditions when the service transfers from the interim Dynamic Purchasing System arrangement.

8.4 Equality

8.4.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.4.2 The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status apply to the first part of the duty.

8.4.3 The objective of the proposed decision is to create an improved inhouse service more closely aligned to Borough Plan priorities and to support the objectives of the Council's Insourcing Policy.

8.4.4 The primary group affected by the proposed decision will be travel buddies, among whom women and Black and Asian minorities are overrepresented in the workforce. It is expected that this proposal will lead to better-paid secure employment with Haringey and access improved terms and conditions including better wage and entry to the Local Government Pension Scheme for those affected.

8.4.5 As Black Asian and Minority ethnic Britons have been 50% more likely to lose their jobs during the Covid-19 lockdown, the decision represents a measure to improve job security and mitigate the extent to which the Covid-19 crisis may exacerbate existing inequalities for protected groups.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Service Review of Travel Buddies

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Appendix 1 – Service Review of Travel Buddies

1. Service Review of Travel Buddies

- 1.1 The service review of the Council’s travel buddy service commenced in June 2020 and continued until January 2021 when, following consultation with staff a decision was made to progress with a service insource.
- 1.2 The review included financial modelling on a range of different outcomes, engagement with other local authorities, VCS groups transport providers, and consultation with Members on a variety of future service options in the context of existing Council policies.
- 1.3 The review afforded officers time to consider a variety of service models and to develop different operating models and staffing structures that would deliver an effective and safe service within the existing budget envelope.
- 1.4 The various options for the future service are listed below in table 1 with the underpinning rationale for rejection or consideration of each operating model.

2. The Enabling Framework

- 2.1 Decision making as to how services across the Council are potentially brought inhouse is underpinned through the use of an Enabling Framework published alongside the Insourcing Policy at Cabinet in March 2020. The Enabling Framework provides context and clearly defined criterion to determine the appropriate delivery model for those services.
- 2.2 When undertaking the commissioning review of travel buddies in June 2020, officers used the Enabling Framework approach to consider a range of future delivery options that could meet the Council’s affordability needs, ensure continuity within the service, and deliver an end result that was suitable to our travel buddies.
- 2.3 The review included options such as inhouse provision, including a phased approach towards inhouse provision, working with other VCS organisations, and other third-party transport providers to identify the right service delivery model that meets our criteria, affordability, and safeguarding requirements.
- 2.4 By structuring the commissioning review of travel buddies within the parameters set out in the Enabling Framework, the focus of decision-making on future service models not only considered factors such as affordability and risk, but also broader outcomes such as social value and community wealth building (CWB).

2.5 The Enabling Framework allowed commissioners to apply a consistent methodology to all potential service options to come to a rationale conclusion that establishes best value using an evidence-based approach.

3. Enabling Framework – Methodology

3.1 A two-tiered appraisal methodology has been established within the Enabling Framework to analyse future service options objectively against criteria that reflect the Council's duty to ensure value for money, its strategic priorities, and the preferred outcomes and objectives of the service.

3.2 Each option is first assessed against the 'baseline/minimum line' criteria. A minimum qualitative 'Go/No Go' criteria has to be met as part of the initial assessment phase. The adoption of a Go/No Go criteria assists in determining which options migrate to a detailed model.

3.3 Affordability and value for money are key criterion at this initial stage but other factors such as risk and social value are also considered. Options that do not meet key criterion are not taken forward for detailed modelling.

3.4 Options that are taken forward for detailed modelling are assessed quantitatively against key criteria and other factors. The following criterion are employed, as a minimum, in making decisions about whether an initiative should be considered in more detail:

1. Affordability and value for money
2. Performance and service quality
3. Capability
4. Organisational Capacity
5. Social and Environmental Values
6. Timing
7. Market conditions
8. Risk

3.5 Options considered for detailed assessment are then weighted to reflect the relative level of importance of each criterion, linked to the Service Outcomes. Each criterion is then scored on a scale from low to high (i.e. 0 (low) to 4 (high)), for each option considered viable.

3.6 All qualifying options are then scored against the assessment criteria before being multiplied by the appropriate weighting to produce a weighted total score to enable the ranking of each of these options.

3.7 Options considered, but rejected at the initial assessment phase, and options taken forward for detailed modelling are shown in Tables 1 and 2 respectively below

Table 2 - Options Considered:

Option	Go / No Go	Rationale	Conclusion	Scoring based on Enabling Framework
<p>A – External Provision</p>	<p>Go</p>	<p>Met minimum qualitative data on affordability and value for money.</p> <p>This option merited further detailed consideration as set out in the Enabling Framework.</p>	<p>External provision does not provide assurances of operational control, oversight, and influence over the service.</p> <p>This option does not offer any potential to increase organisational capacity and capability to enable innovation and expertise in response to a future change to corporate estate.</p> <p>Whilst external provision offers value for money, the Enabling Framework also puts an emphasis on social value impact – this option does not deliver on the underpinning ambitions of the Insourcing Policy or the Council’s approach to CWB.</p> <p>Providers are not typically London Living Wage (LLW) employers and do not meet the Council’s requirements in terms of our LLW employer commitments.</p>	<p>51%</p>
<p>B – Continue interim DPS arrangement</p>	<p>Go</p>	<p>Met minimum qualitative data on affordability and value for money.</p>	<p>Did not fully meet the Insourcing Policy agenda.</p> <p>The Enabling Framework notes that regenerating capacity in terms of</p>	<p>73%</p>

		This option merited further detailed consideration as set out in the Enabling Framework.	<p>organisational infrastructure and assets may be challenging and needs to be undertaken in a controlled and managed way.</p> <p>However, to bring services inhouse in a meaningful way, there needs to be sufficient capacity within that service to allow for a successful transition.</p>	
C – Continue service with VCS partner	No Go	<p>Rejected at initial assessment phase.</p> <p>Did not meet minimum qualitative ‘Go/No Go’ criteria due to local market conditions and lack of capacity.</p>		
H – Full service insource	Go	<p>Met minimum qualitative data on affordability and value for money.</p> <p>This option merited further detailed consideration as set out in the Enabling Framework.</p>	<p>Met minimum qualitative data and merited further detailed consideration.</p> <p>Meets insource objectives at best value.</p> <p>Greater social value in conjunction with Enabling Framework criteria and CWB approach.</p> <p>Provides stronger capacity for service control and performance management.</p> <p>Improves overall customer experience and standardisation of SEND services.</p>	85%

			Greater capacity for future innovation and agile response to Council's changing approach to SEND. Potential to merge service with Haringey escort service due to existing synergies with roles.	
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Table 2 - Scoring of Qualifying Options vs Enabling Framework Criterion:

Enabling Framework Criteria	Weighting	External Provision (0 – 4)	DPS Arrangement (0 – 4)	Inhouse Model Scoring (0 – 4)
Affordability and value for money	2	1	4	3
Performance and service quality	2	2	3	4
Capability	1	3	3	4
Organisational Capacity	1	2	3	4
Social and Environmental Values	2	1	2	4
Timing	1	4	4	2
Market conditions	2	1	3	3
Risk	2	2	2	4
Total Score		27/52	38/52	44/52
Percentage		51%	73%	85%