

## New approach for London Dial-a-Ride service

**DIAL-A-RIDE in London is changing with the launch of 33 Mercedes-Benz Vito People Carriers. At least another 50 are expected to enter service before the end of the year.**

The Vitos have electric swivelling height-adjustable seats at the sides so passengers don't have to negotiate steps. A hinged floor at the rear raises and lowers on airbags to allow wheelchair users to travel on a horizontal floor.

Transport for London (TfL) has been running Dial-a-Ride since April 2002, although the

service has been operating for 25 years. Dial-a-Ride Managing Director Jeff Chamberlain told routeONE: "We developed the new design to meet passengers' requirements for a vehicle that is easier to use and smarter to travel in as well as giving a smoother more comfortable ride."

Passenger reaction is to be assessed alongside the established fleet of 321 minibuses. The next step, says TfL, "will be to consult customers on the part the larger vehicles should play and how they should be redesigned."



London's first Vito Dial-a-Rides replace minibuses



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## Dial-a-Ride's biggest ever image change

THE Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone yesterday announced the launch of 33 new Dial-a-Ride vehicles, the biggest design change to the fleet since the service began 25 years ago.

The new vehicles have been designed in consultation with existing customers who tested prototype vehicles and suggested improvements.

Peter Scott Presland, director of Transport For All said: "We are very impressed with the final version of the new Dial-a-Ride people carrier and we are not easily impressed. Our reservations about the prototypes have been met in their entirety and this illustrates the importance of listening to users because Dial-a-Ride now have a vehicle they can be extremely proud of and which passengers will be very happy to use."

As most Dial-a-Ride journeys have just one or two passengers per trip, the new, smaller vehicles are made for individual journeys. They have better suspension and more space between seats; electric height-adjustable seats that swivel to the side so passengers don't have to negotiate steps, and a hinged floor at the back raises and



Image change: Dial-a-Ride introduces its new, smaller vehicles

lowers on airbags, allowing wheelchair users to travel on a level floor.

The new people carriers will join 321 mini-buses already in existence. These mini-buses will stay in the fleet while

demand for the service is assessed and passengers give feedback on the new design.

The next step will be to consult customers on the part the larger vehicles should play and how they should be redesigned.



Effrye museum's herbal treasures

visitors find their way around, maps downloaded for each of the trails. Historic Garden Museum Trail and 1's Literary Houses Trail audio files been created which can also be added onto personal MP3 players. Maps and the tours are the following websites london.gov.uk/discoverlondon; isitlondon.com; www.mgm.org.uk; 4hourmuseum.org.uk. Audio tours are also available on antennaudio.com; www.thegallery.nl.com and www.audible.com. Plan your journey to any of the trails www.tfl.gov.uk/journeyplanner.

