GoSutton

Convenient, affordable, eco-friendly trips around town.

Overview

In February 2019, Transport for London selected ViaVan to trial a dynamically routed, demand-responsive shared ride service in Sutton, a London borough known to have high car use and has been difficult to serve with traditional public transport due to its relatively low housing density and its historic development planned around people using private transport. Therefore, it has not always been practical to run a dedicated bus service in certain areas. Launched in May 2019, the new service, GoSutton, powered by ViaVan technology and operated by local transportation provider GoAhead, offered an even more convenient, affordable, and eco-friendly way for residents to get around. As ViaVan’s seventh deployment in the UK, and second service in London, the partnership also offered TfL a proven, cost-effective means to attract new ridership, while being aimed at finding out whether flexible demand responsive transport services can play a role in boosting public transport use.

4.9/5
Average service rating by riders

10
Minute average wait-times for vehicle arrival
“We need ambitious ways of expanding public transport options in Sutton to get people out of their cars and improve local air quality. This on-demand service is exactly what we need in Sutton.”

– Manuel Abellan, Chair of Sutton’s Environment & Transport Committee

“I have tried other demand-responsive services and had mixed experiences. This service, however, was in a different league. The app was easy to use, the arrival quick, the pick-up point in a good location, the ride smooth and comfortable and the service from the driver and operator friendly and efficient.”

– GoSutton customer

Solution

Working closely with TfL, Via localized its world-class technology to meet TfL’s needs for a 12-month trial, and coordinated the launch and operation of the service, from fleet procurement to driver recruitment, with GoAhead, a reputable local partner. Using a mobile app or dial-in number, passengers indicated their pick-up and drop-off locations to book a ride in a uniform fleet of Euro VI 14-passenger Mercedes-Benz vehicles. ViaVan’s advanced technology directed passengers to nearby “virtual bus stops” for pickup and dropoff, and dynamically routed the vehicle in real-time, allowing for quick and efficient shared trips without lengthy detours, or inconvenient schedules. The service offered a compelling alternative for those who would otherwise drive, and increased mobility and autonomy options to those who cannot. Reflecting TfL’s interest in the integration of demand-responsive transport solutions into its larger network, ViaVan’s tech team facilitated the integration of the local Freedom Pass, which allowed senior citizens to ride for free. The service was accessible to riders of all means and abilities: it accepted bookings by phone; allowed a variety of payment forms; and accommodated wheelchairs on all vehicles.

Results

From launch in May 2019, GoSutton quickly attracted thousands of local residents and grew steadily. Impressed by the convenience and affordability, riders rated the service an average of 4.9 out of 5 stars. The service also helped to support the Mayor’s initiative to reduce congestion in London and achieve 80% of all journeys by public transport, cycling or walking by 2041.