

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date:	9 March 2010
Title:	Community Transport Vehicle Grants
Reference:	1400
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to recommend vehicle grants to community transport operators using funds from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme and the Community Transport allocation for 2009/10.

1.2. This paper seeks to:

- outline the background to providing vehicle grants
- report on the grant applications which have been received and outline the criteria against which these have been assessed
- recommend grant awards.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The County Council has been making funding available, primarily through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme, to support and develop community transport services which support the LTP objectives of accessibility and social inclusion. These services can make a key contribution towards enhancing accessibility and reducing isolation, particularly in rural areas, for those people or families who do not have access to their own transport. Often these services can be provided in areas and at times when it may not be feasible or cost-effective to provide a conventional bus service, thus helping to sustain present travel opportunities whilst making use of alternative approaches.

2.2. In addition, many of these alternative approaches will be provided with smaller vehicles, thus reducing vehicle impact on the environment. The

demand-responsive nature of some services, particularly where these provide a door-to-door transport service, could also offer some reassurance to those people who may have concerns about personal safety on conventional public transport. Supporting the opportunities for more group transport movements may also potentially lead to lower car usage.

3. Criteria for Grants

3.1. Grants to community transport schemes are normally based on the following principles:

- (i) The number of community transport vehicles already available in the district or borough and the extent to which these meet the needs of the community. In some cases this will mean that grants may be prioritised to provide additional vehicles, whilst in others the priority may be to replace current vehicles in order to sustain existing community transport schemes.
- (ii) Whether the grant will help to increase opportunities to develop the community transport sector as a whole by filling gaps in provision.
- (iii) To what extent the grant will help achieve Hampshire's aims of improving accessibility and well-being; and what contribution the vehicle could make to the delivery of passenger transport services.
- (iv) How well used the vehicle will be and how many local groups will make use of it on a regular basis.
- (v) The provision of grants to as many schemes as possible, with emphasis on those that have received little support in recent years.
- (vi) Where the grant requested is for a replacement vehicle, priority will generally be given to those vehicles approaching the end of their economic life, based on a combination of age, mileage, condition and suitability.
- (vii) Priority will also be given to those applications where at least 25% of the cost of the vehicle has been raised from other sources. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider the award of a grant for more than 75% of the purchase cost of a vehicle.

3.2. Suitable applicants are required to:

- (i) be an existing voluntary or community organisation which already provides a transport service to the wider community;
- (ii) be already operating vehicles which provide a service for the wider community rather than for a specific activity, group or purpose;

- (iii) be able to provide evidence of the need for a new or replacement vehicle;
- (iv) be able to demonstrate that the use of the new or replacement vehicle will:
 - (a) support the Local Transport Plan objectives of improving accessibility and social inclusion;
 - (b) foster the development of voluntary and community organisations in their area of operation and improve well-being; and
 - (c) support the provision and development of community transport activities in Hampshire;
- (v) be in need of financial support for a new or replacement vehicle; and
- (vi) be able to provide evidence of vehicle purchase costs and any other sources of funding towards the vehicle.

4. Vehicle Grant Applications

- 4.1. Grant applications have been received from the following organisations. Details on these grant applications and how they have been assessed against the criteria can be found in Appendix 1.

Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus

- 4.2. On 12 January 2010 the Executive Member for Environment agreed that a grant of £19,684 be awarded to the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus Scheme towards the purchase of a mini-bus.
- 4.3. The grant application from the organisation indicated that the cost of purchasing a new vehicle would be partly funded by selling their existing vehicle for £7,000. Further correspondence has now been received from the scheme stating that the resale value of the existing vehicle has now been downgraded to £3,000, with a request for the County Council to provide a supplementary grant to fund the difference of £4,000.
- 4.4. Whilst this would not seem an unreasonable request there is a question over whether the organisation could achieve a higher value for the vehicle than £3,000. It is proposed therefore that a further supplementary grant of up to £4,000 be awarded to the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus with the exact amount being determined once the actual resale value of the vehicle is known.
- 4.5. This additional sum can be funded from the LTP Capital Programme. This would increase the overall expenditure on grants from £196,455 to £200,455 in 2009/10.

Community Action Fareham

- 4.6. Community Action Fareham has applied for a grant of £25,500 for the purchase of a small wheelchair accessible vehicle. Up until May 2009 the organisation operated a similar vehicle but the vehicle was withdrawn when it failed its MOT and the repair costs were not viable.
- 4.7. The new vehicle will be available for both groups and individuals to use. The organisation aims to make the vehicle as widely available as possible and ensure that it is used to help people with a wide range of needs. This could include providing transport for individuals with mobility and learning difficulties and parents with young children. Providing transport to support the work of local organisations, including youth groups, could also form part of the vehicle role.
- 4.8. The vehicle will be operated as part of the Community Transport Scheme which Community Action Fareham operates along with the Fareham Dial-a-Ride service and Fareham Shopmobility Scheme. The vehicle will be driven largely by volunteer drivers and will provide a more cost-effective and efficient way of responding to journey requests which do not require a larger vehicle. There is an increasing trend for the group hire schemes in Hampshire to have a vehicle of this type in their fleet.
- 4.9. Following the recent retendering of community transport services, the new contract arrangements for the Fareham Dial-a-Ride service has resulted in some reduction in service capacity. The re-introduction of a small wheelchair accessible vehicle may help to off-set some journeys which cannot be undertaken under the new contract in the longer term. For this reason and given that the purchase of this vehicle would provide an opportunity to restore a previously lost resource there would seem to be an exceptional case for providing a grant which covers the full cost of this vehicle.
- 4.10. The grant to Community Action Fareham can be made from the Community Transport Capital Programme allocation for 2009/10.

5. Outline of Options

- 5.1. A decision needs to be made on which grants should be supported and the following options exist:
- 5.2. **Option 1:** Provide vehicle grants to both organisations.

Risk Assessment: This will ensure that the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus has sufficient resources to replace their existing vehicle. It will also allow Community Action Fareham to restore a transport facility which was previously available to the local community.
- 5.3. **Option 2:** Provide no grant support to any of the organisations which have submitted applications for vehicle grants.

Risk Assessment: This could mean that the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus scheme is unable to utilise the previous grant awarded by the County Council until the shortfall in the monies required to replace their existing vehicle is found. Not replacing the vehicle would result in higher operating costs longer term and could eventually affect the viability of the services provided. The opportunity for restoring a previous transport facility in the Fareham area which could eventually help to offset the reduced capacity in the Fareham Dial-a-Ride service would be lost.

6. Options Analysis/Comparison

- 6.1. Option 1 is seen as the preferred way forward. Conditions will be applied to these grants. This will ensure that vehicles comply with all necessary legal and safety requirements and are used in a manner which is compatible with the overall objectives set out in the Community Transport Strategy. The conditions will also cover those situations where either the organisation is disbanded or the vehicle is disposed of and not replaced. The operating cost of these vehicles once purchased will be covered by the community transport schemes themselves. The costs will be recovered through hire charges to organisations or individuals using the vehicles and income from contracts for providing specific services.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That a further supplementary grant of up to £4,000 be awarded to the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus, in addition to the £19,684 previously awarded, to assist with the purchase of a mini-bus.
- 7.2. That a grant of £25,500 be awarded to Community Action Fareham for the purchase of a small wheelchair accessible vehicle.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. The proposals in this report seek to improve accessibility and community involvement for hard to reach and disadvantaged members of the community.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. Most schemes offer transport for youth groups and support wider community involvement.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Use of demand responsive and group transport reflects users needs and reduces needs for individual car journeys.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Introduction of newer vehicles allows the latest emission standards to be meet.

Community Transport Vehicle Grant Awards

Proposed Grants

Organisation	Amount Requested	% funding of total vehicle cost	Comments	Criteria for awarding grants (see page 2 for details)						
				(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)
1. Broughton & Mottisfont Bus	£4,000	12% (70% when both grants are taken into account)	A replacement vehicle to enable continuation of transport services for local residents to enhance quality of life through access to key services. Service includes weekly and monthly scheduled trips to local key towns as well as hiring by local community groups for transport related activity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Community Action Fareham	£25,500	100%	A grant to replace a small wheelchair accessible vehicle which was withdrawn from service in May 2009 after failing its MOT with the repair costs not being viable	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

TOTAL: £29,500

Criteria Key

- (i) The number of community transport vehicles already available in the district or borough and the extent to which these meet the needs of the community. In some cases this will mean that grants may be prioritised to provide additional vehicles, whilst in others the priority may be to replace current vehicles in order to sustain existing community transport schemes.
- (ii) Whether the grant will help to increase opportunities to develop the community transport sector as a whole by filling gaps in provision.
- (iii) The extent that the grant will help achieve Hampshire's aims of improving accessibility and well-being; and the contribution to the delivery of passenger transport services.
- (iv) The vehicle will be well used and local groups will make use of it on a regular basis.
- (v) The provision of grants to as many schemes as possible, with emphasis on those that have received little support in recent years.
- (vi) Where the grant requested is for a replacement vehicle, priority will generally be given to those vehicles approaching the end of their economic life, based on a combination of age, mileage, condition and suitability.
- (vii) Priority will also be given to those applications where at least 25% of the cost of the vehicle has been raised from other sources. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider the award of a grant for more than 75% of the purchase cost of a vehicle.