

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member – Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	6 March 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Community Transport Contracts and Good Neighbour Support Service Contract
<b>Reference:</b>	3701
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

**Contact name:** Kevin Ings

**Tel:** 01962 846986

**Email:** kevin.ings@hants.gov.uk

### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 Most community transport contracts are due for renewal in 2012/13. This report proposes broadly similar arrangements for the next generation of contracts, although uncertainty over the future of some district council funding contributions may limit the initial term of some contracts. This report covers the following areas:

- i) The background to the current arrangements.
- ii) The new corporate approach to grants.
- iii) Dial-A-Ride/Call & Go Service Contracts.
- iv) Community Transport Group Hire Minibus Scheme Contracts.
- v) Wheels to Work Contract.
- vi) Good Neighbour Support Service Contract.
- vii) Tendering process and evaluation for those community transport services being competitively tendered.
- viii) The award of a grant to YelaBus.

### 2. Background

2.1. In 2007 the Executive Member agreed arrangements for the support of community transport services by means of grants or contracts. Of particular relevance was the move from service agreements to tendered contracts for the majority of Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services.

2.2. In broad terms, the agreed approach was as follows:

Type of service	Grant or Contract	Comments
Voluntary car schemes	Grants	No change. Only a small number of schemes apply for grants.
Vehicle grants	Grants	Primarily grants to group hire minibus schemes towards the cost of replacement vehicles.
Dial-a-Ride schemes using only volunteer drivers	Grant or Single tender contract depending on value	This applies to smaller-scale schemes in Bishops Waltham and Romsey. The use of volunteer drivers means that it is highly unlikely that tendering would result in a lower cost provider.
Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services (larger schemes where paid drivers are used)	Tendered contracts	Tendering is appropriate as other providers could deliver these services.
Group Hire Minibus Schemes (district-wide)	Single tender contracts	Agreed single tender criteria apply where a Council of Voluntary Service (CVS) provides the group hire minibus service.

2.3. The overall approach has worked well. In particular the tendering of the Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go contracts resulted in broadly the same level of service being secured within an unchanged budget. This was achieved by careful design of the tender process, which allayed concerns that prices would rise and therefore result in a much lower level of service for the same budget.

### **3. Grants and the new corporate approach**

3.1. The County Council is adopting a new corporate approach to grants, including new application forms, common across all departments. There is also a simplified application process for small grants of under £1,000. The new system, to be introduced in April 2012, will not affect the ability to offer grants to community transport schemes.

3.2. Applicants will be able to apply for a grant under one of the following four categories:

- i) Voluntary car schemes grants.
- ii) Other purposes grants.
- iii) Vehicle grants.
- iv) Transport Challenge Fund.

Criteria have been established for what is eligible for a grant under each of the above categories. Funding may only be available at certain times or be time limited for some of these categories e.g. vehicle grants and Transport Challenge Fund.

#### **4. Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go Contracts**

4.1. In most cases current contracts expire at the end of January 2013. Legal and procurement advice has been sought and a similar tender process can be used. A number of issues will need to be taken into consideration in designing future contracts, as set out below:

- (i) Funding contributions from district councils  
Current contracts are underpinned by four-year legal agreements with each district council to guarantee their contributions over the contract term. Given the financial constraints facing the public sector, it is already clear that some councils will be reluctant to commit to funding levels over such a long period. It is therefore proposed that services are tendered on the basis of an initial contract term (expected to be for a minimum of two years) extendable by mutual consent up to a maximum of six years and two months (up to 31 March 2019). Clearly, the shorter guaranteed minimum term may make the services less attractive to bidders but this appears to be an unavoidable consequence of the financial constraints faced by district funding partners.
- (ii) The Community Transport Review  
This proposes that Dial-a-Ride services, which are only for use by people with mobility difficulties, be converted into Call & Go services, which are also available to other members of the public who do not have access to a bus service or their own transport. Dial-a-Rides operate at present in Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Test Valley and Winchester. Call & Go is already in East Hampshire, Fleet (Fleet Link), Havant and New Forest. Conversion from Dial-a-Ride to Call & Go does present some practical problems, not least ensuring that current resources are not overstretched by extending the criteria in these schemes. In urban areas, schemes will also need to have a detailed knowledge of the local bus network to help them determine whether an able-bodied person is eligible to register for Call & Go.

Subject to these issues being addressed and the agreement of the respective district councils being secured it is proposed that all services be tendered as Call & Go and that the Dial-a-Ride brand is phased out.

(iii) Smart procurement: the need to maximise cost-effectiveness of tendered services

Current procurement initiatives include developing a Transport Category Management Plan, to take a broader look at the council's transport needs with a view to achieving efficiencies through co-ordinating the procurement of services. Although this initiative will only be in its early stages when the tenders for these contracts are being finalised, opportunities are being explored to see what potential exists for integrating home-to-school Special Educational Needs transport contracts, day care contracts, relevant Taxishare services and small mainstream contracts into the tenders. This in part will depend on how intensively used the existing Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go services are at key times and the extent of the savings that could be made. As most Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go services are well used, the potential for integration may be limited unless reduced capacity at certain times of the day is accepted as a trade-off. It may also be possible to offset the 'time capacity' lost with improved capacity at other times during the day through a move to more semi scheduled services. Options will only be included in services where the pattern of use is such that the loss of service (at school times, for example) is less significant, the potential savings are particularly worthwhile and the district council is in agreement with the proposal.

4.2. There are four services that are not currently tendered and the following action is proposed in relation to these services:

(i) Bishops Waltham Dial-a-Ride.

A one morning a week service, staffed entirely by volunteers with annual costs of approximately £1,500 per annum. It is proposed that support for this scheme continues through an annual grant.

(ii) Romsey Dial-a-Ride.

Test Valley Community Services (TVCS) operates this service, again using only volunteer drivers. A four year single tender contract was awarded as a better means of securing a defined level of service for a somewhat larger scheme than Bishops Waltham. Test Valley Borough Council contributes to this service but is only able to guarantee its contribution for 2012/13 at this stage. It is therefore proposed to award a one year single tender contract, extendable up to four years to TVCS, at a cost of £13,500 per annum commencing on 1 April 2012. This contract will include the Romsey and Andover Dial-a-Ride services which will be renamed as the Test Valley Call & Go service during the first year of the new contract.

- (iii) Parish Link.  
A one day a week service providing a transport link from the southern parishes of Eastleigh Borough to Eastleigh town centre, operated under a single tender contract with an annual value of £8,000. It has a distinct identity from that of Eastleigh Dial-a-Ride although both services are for people with mobility difficulties primarily because this service was initially established with time-limited funding which has now ceased. It is proposed that, for the next round of contracts, this service should be incorporated into the tender for the Eastleigh Dial-a-Ride service. The current contract for the Parish Link service expires on 31 March 2012. A further single tender contract is proposed for the period 1 April 2012 – 31 January 2013. This will bring the contract arrangements for this service in line with those of the Eastleigh Dial-a-Ride service which is being tendered.
  
- (iv) Yateley Shopper  
A twice monthly service providing a transport link for residents in Yateley to Camberley operating under a single tender contract which expires in January 2013 (£2,325 per annum). This service uses volunteer drivers and it is proposed that a further two year single tender contract, extendable up to four years, is awarded for this.

4.3. In summary it is proposed that:

- (i) Contracts for those Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services being tendered be awarded from 1 February 2013 for a minimum term (generally no less than two years), extendable up to a maximum term of six years and two months, subject to continued district council contributions and satisfactory performance by the contractor.
  
- (ii) Services be tendered as Call & Go, subject to the issues identified above being addressed and the agreement of the respective district councils being secured.
  
- (iii) Smart procurement options be explored, in order to maximise overall cost-effectiveness.
  
- (iv) Support for the Bishop's Waltham Dial-a-Ride service should continue to be provided through an annual grant.
  
- (v) That a four year single tender contract be awarded to Test Valley Community Services for the operation of the Test Valley Call & Go Service.

- (vi) That the Parish Link scheme be incorporated into the Eastleigh Dial-a-Ride tender
- (vii) That a single tender contract for the operation of the Parish Link service be awarded for the period 1 April 2012 – 31 January 2013.
- (viii) That a two year single tender contract, extendable up to four years, be awarded to YelaBus for the operation of the Yateley Shopper.

## **5. Group Hire Minibus Scheme contracts**

5.1. These schemes provide a pool of wheelchair accessible mini-buses, available for hire by local voluntary and community groups. The contribution made by the County Council usually represents the cost of a 'transport organiser' post and associated administration costs to oversee the operation of the fleet, ensure that the mini-buses are properly maintained, and recruit and train volunteer mini-bus drivers. The reason behind these contracts is to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector. It is a more efficient and effective use of public money to build capacity within a single organisation, which can make good use of its mini-buses by hiring to a range of groups, rather than provide individual grants to organisations to purchase their own mini-buses, many of which will be little used.

5.2. Current contracts expire at the end of September 2012. It is proposed to award new single tender contracts to the Group Hire Minibus Schemes where they meet the previously agreed single tender criteria as set out in Appendix 1. A number of issues will need to be taken into consideration in awarding new contracts, as set out below:

- (i) Funding contributions from district councils  
District council contributions apply to the following schemes: East Hampshire, Eastleigh, New Forest and Test Valley. The current contracts for these schemes are underpinned by legal agreements with each district council to guarantee their contributions over the contract term. District council contributions have not yet been confirmed for 2012/13, although the outlook is hopeful. Given the continuing difficulties facing the public sector, it is likely that further contracts from 1 October 2012 will need to be awarded for an initial six month term, extendable to a maximum of up to two years when district council contributions for subsequent financial years are confirmed. For those schemes wholly funded by the County Council, the proposal is to award contracts with a maximum term of two years, with an initial term of one year.
- (ii) The Community Transport Review: Redistribution of funding  
Current funding levels for schemes vary considerably; they have evolved over time and need to be re-aligned. The Community Transport Review proposed developing criteria to redistribute the County Council's funding on a more equitable basis. Various criteria

were suggested and work in conjunction with a group of operators will see firm proposals developed during 2012. As there will need to be a formal 12 week Compact-compliant consultation before any changes in funding are introduced, it is proposed that any changes in funding levels are introduced in Year 2 of the new contracts (commencing October 2013) at the earliest, after being agreed by the Executive Member.

(iii) Performance Targets: Proposed Benchmarking Tool

The Community Transport Review also suggested that a 'benchmarking tool' be introduced to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each scheme. These could be used to inform the development of performance targets to be included in the next generation of contracts. This would build on the monitoring information which schemes already provide. The benchmarking tool, although sound in concept, will require work to develop to ensure that it recognises all factors that are relevant to a scheme's performance, to include vehicle fleet size, population density, the index of multiple deprivation etc. The County Council, working with a small group of operators, will take the idea forward. The tool will then be trialled in its prototype form, with one or two operators, before being rolled out to all operators, most likely in Year 2 of the new contracts (October 2013).

5.3. There are two Group Hire Minibus Schemes which are currently tendered and the following action is proposed in relation to these services:

(i) Basingstoke Community Transport

Basingstoke Community Transport is a group hire minibuss scheme but does not meet the criteria for the award of a single tender contract as it is a stand-alone scheme and not run by a Council of Voluntary Service (CVS). It was tendered with the Dial-a-Ride schemes in 2008 and will therefore need to be tendered with the Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go tenders. As Basingstoke is the only place where the group hire scheme and Dial-a-Ride services are run by separate operators, consideration has been given as to whether these services should be grouped together, which could achieve some efficiencies in terms of vehicle utilisation and overall costs. However, this does present significant practical difficulties and given this, it is proposed that this service should again be tendered alongside the Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go contracts.

(ii) Community Transport for East Hampshire

Community Transport for East Hampshire is a group hire scheme which also operates East Hampshire Call & Go and the fortnightly Denmead Shopper. When the previous operator, Community Action Hampshire, surrendered the contract in December 2010, the service was competitively tendered as a package (Group Hire, Call & Go and

Denmead Shopper) to ensure that the Call & Go income would help ensure the viability of the group hire scheme. The proposal is to do the same again with Community Transport East Hampshire being tendered with the Call & Go contracts.

5.4 In summary it is proposed that:

- (i) Single tender contracts be awarded for those Group Hire Minibus Schemes which meet the single tender criteria for a maximum term of two years from 1 October 2012, but with an initial term of one year (or six months where district council contributions cannot be guaranteed beyond 31 March 2013).
- (ii) Contract values for Year 1 be at the current level plus inflation.
- (iii) Extension of the contracts beyond Year 1 will be on the basis of the new funding level that results from the proposed redistribution of funding and the introduction of performance targets based on the outputs from the proposed benchmarking tool.
- (iv) The Basingstoke Community Transport Scheme should be tendered alongside the Dial-a-Ride/Call & Go contracts.
- (v) The Community Transport East Hampshire scheme is tendered as part of a package with the Call & Go and Denmead Shopper contracts.

## **6. Wheels to Work moped scheme for young people**

6.1. The Wheels to Work scheme provides short term moped loans to young people to help them access employment and training opportunities. The scheme operates in East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester. The countywide scheme has the capacity to loan out 34 mopeds across the four districts covered.

6.2. District councils in each of the above areas contribute towards the scheme with the exception of Test Valley Borough Council which withdrew its funding prior to the introduction of the current contract. The number of mopeds available in each of the areas reflects the level of district council contribution: East Hampshire (12), New Forest (8), Test Valley (4) and Winchester (10).

6.3. The current contract commenced on 1 August 2009, with an initial two year contract period but with the ability to extend to a maximum contract term of six years, subject to continued district council contributions and satisfactory performance of the contractor. An extension to 31 March 2012 was subsequently agreed.

- 6.4. It is proposed that the contract now be extended to 31 March 2013, with appropriate reductions in value and service provision should there be any reduction in contributions from New Forest District Council or Winchester City Council. East Hampshire District Council has already confirmed its contribution to this contract extension.

## **7. Good Neighbours Support Service Contract**

- 7.1. The Good Neighbours Support Service is an umbrella organisation for voluntary care or good neighbours schemes in Hampshire, of which there are well over 100 such groups. The Good Neighbours Support Service provides advice and support to existing voluntary care groups and, where the opportunity exists, develops new groups. A significant activity of the majority of voluntary care groups is providing transport using volunteer car drivers and in view of this the County Council's Community Transport Team works very closely with the Good Neighbours Support Service in supporting this part of the voluntary and community transport sector in Hampshire.
- 7.2. The service provided by the Good Neighbours Support Service is largely funded through an existing arrangement with the County Council's Adult Services Department and the Hampshire Primary Care Trust, which meet the majority of its operating costs given the groups focus on older people and well-being. The Economy, Transport and Environment Department has also provided financial support to the organisation through a two year single tender contract which runs until 31 March 2012 to support their stewardship of groups and the promotion of good practice. A new two year single tender contract is proposed from the 1 April 2012 at an annual cost of £5,000.
- 7.3. A number of measures are being introduced with the additional Government funding which the County Council has received for community transport. One of these involves setting up new car schemes and the Good Neighbours Support Service is well placed to undertake this work. It is proposed therefore that a further sum of up to £20,500 from the government funding be made available to the Good Neighbours Support Service, during the first year of the single tender contract, to provide them with the necessary additional staff resources to undertake this work given that the setting up of new voluntary car schemes is particularly resource intensive.
- 7.4. In addition to this, the Economy, Transport and Environment Department will continue to offer small grants to individual schemes that make a loss on their transport activities. Few groups apply for grants as most are self-supporting.

## **8. Tendering Process and Evaluation Of Contracts**

- 8.1. Prior to the tenders being issued for the Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go and Group Hire Minibus Schemes a number of decisions need to be made. Approval is sought for the overall approach outlined below in order to allow officers to

proceed with refining the details of the process in preparation for the issuing of tenders.

- 8.2. A restricted tendering process will be used to ensure that organisations on the tender list have relevant experience, good references and are financially sound. The conditions of contract and service specifications will set clear quality standards for the services being tendered to ensure that the quality of service to users remains high.
- 8.3. To manage tender prices, tenderers will be required to indicate the level of service they can provide for the available budget for each service. In addition they may also submit variant bids. Any bid in excess of the available budget will be rejected.
- 8.4. The evaluation of tenders will be based on quality and price but as price will be capped service quality and pattern of service may be given a higher emphasis over price. Quality will include any added value the tenderer can offer at no extra cost. Tenderers will need to submit a method statement which will be used to assess the extent to which they can meet or exceed the quality standards set out in the contract.
- 8.5. The services being tendered will be split into the lots and a decision will need to be taken on where to set the upper limit in terms of what any one tenderer will be awarded. This could either be based on the number of lots or the maximum contract value awarded to a successful tenderer or a combination of the two. There is a balance to be struck between preventing the creation of a dominant provider and ensuring that the County Council and its funding partners are able to benefit from any efficiencies which could arise from several schemes being operated together.
- 8.6. The tendering process is being designed to ensure the quality of service to users whilst encouraging tenderers to submit realistic bids within the available budget. It is proposed that the overall approach be agreed in principle and that the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to develop the detail in consultation with the Executive Member of Environment and Transport.
- 8.7. The County Council will also need to seek the agreement of the respective district councils which jointly fund these contracts with regard to the arrangements for the tendering process and evaluation. A meeting with officers of district councils is planned for 29 February 2012 and an update from this meeting will be given at the decision day.

## **9. Future Support to YelaBus**

- 9.1 YelaBus is an established organisation providing mini-buses for groups in Yateley and is well regarded locally. YelaBus received substantial Lottery grant funding from 2000-2006 enabling the employment of paid drivers without the need to pass the costs on to hirers. Other schemes in Hampshire use

volunteer drivers or charge a premium to recover the extra cost of providing a paid driver. It is this distinction which puts YelaBus at odds with all other such schemes in Hampshire and has led to the demand for subsidy funding which is not provided to schemes elsewhere in the county.

- 9.2 Since 2006 the County Council has provided grants to enable YelaBus to make the transition to working as other schemes do, with greater use of volunteers or full recovery of paid driver costs. A grant of £9,000 is being provided during 2011/12.
- 9.3 The current funding arrangement with YelaBus comes to an end on 31 March 2012. The latest progress report from YelaBus shows that during the period 1 January – 31 December 2011 the scheme provided 476 minibus hires, an increase of 6% on the previous year.
- 9.4 The report also shows that the number of hires provided by volunteer drivers during the period increased by 39% with hires using paid drivers reducing by 18%. This has resulted in expenditure on drivers' wages being reduced.
- 9.5 Given the progress which the scheme has made in meeting the milestones set during the last funding period it is proposed that a further grant should be offered for 2012/13 but at a reduced level. The reduced grant will reflect the progress which the scheme has already made towards achieving longer term financial sustainability and will provide an incentive for further progress to be made.
- 9.6 The financial information provided by the scheme for the period 1 January – 31 December 2011 would suggest that, if vehicle replacement costs are excluded, a grant of up to £6,500 could be required from the County Council to support the scheme's operation in the next financial year.
- 9.7 The consultants who undertook the Community Transport review for the County Council recommended that a rationale needs to be developed to allocate funding to support community transport schemes and that this should be applied in a consistent way to all group hire schemes in Hampshire, including YelaBus. The Executive Member for Environment and Transport has previously agreed that any longer term support for YelaBus should be consistent with this approach.
- 9.8 It is therefore proposed that a grant of up to £6,500 be awarded to YelaBus for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, subject to the satisfactory negotiation of agreed milestones with YelaBus. Providing further grant support to YelaBus will provide the organisation with the necessary financial support which it requires to operate until 31 March 2013. This will encourage the continued transition from paid to volunteer drivers in order to stimulate the longer term sustainability of the scheme.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1. This report sets out the arrangements for dealing with those community transport contracts which are due for renewal during 2012/13 including the tender and evaluation process for those contracts which will be tendered. The arrangements for a new corporate grants approach is also included together with a grant award for YelaBus.

## **11. Recommendations**

- 11.1. That the arrangements for procuring and supporting Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services as summarised in 4.3 of this report be agreed.
- 11.2. That the arrangements for procuring and supporting the Group Hire Minibus Schemes as summarised in 5.4 of this report be agreed.
- 11.3. That the contract for the Wheels to Work scheme be extended until 31 March 2013 with appropriate reductions in value and service provision should there be any reduction in contributions from New Forest District Council or Winchester City Council.
- 11.4. That a new two year single tender contract be awarded to the Good Neighbours Support Service from 1 April 2012 as summarised in 7.2-7.3 of this report.
- 11.5. That the overall approach to tendering as set out in paragraphs 8.1-8.7 of the report, be agreed in principle and that the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to develop the detail in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport and the district councils before the tenders are issued.
- 11.6. That the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to agree any subsequent variations to the tenders and contracts in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.
- 11.7. That a grant of up to £6,500 be awarded to YelaBus for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, subject to the satisfactory negotiation of agreed milestones with YelaBus.

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

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	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 for those members of the community who cannot, or who find it difficult, to use the existing public transport services, including hard to reach and disadvantaged members of the community.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. Some of the services will offer transport to young people and 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 the need 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 emissions standards to be met.

### Single Tender Criteria - Group Hire Minibus Schemes

These schemes provide a pool of wheelchair accessible mini-buses, available for hire by local voluntary and community groups. The contribution made by the County Council usually represents the cost of a 'transport organiser' post and associated administration costs to oversee the operation of the fleet, ensure that the mini-buses are properly maintained, and recruit and train volunteer mini-bus drivers. The reason behind these grants is to build capacity in the voluntary and community sector. It is a more efficient and effective use of public money to build capacity within a single organisation, which can make good use of its mini-buses by hiring to a range of groups, rather than provide individual grants to organisations to purchase their own mini-buses, many of which will be little used.

There is a case for awarding these contracts through single tender negotiation. Under Standing Orders there are existing criteria which cover two main reasons for not seeking competitive tenders:

- (i) a specialist provider - only one company is able to provide a service, for example this can apply to specialist care providers;
- (ii) emergencies - where a short term contract needs to be put into place pending competitive tendering, for example securing a service where a contractor ceases trading at short notice.

In order for these schemes to be considered as specialist providers, single tender criteria was developed and agreed and negotiations took place with relevant organisations who fulfilled these requirements. In addition to this there is a need to put an entry on the County Council's procurement website to give notice that these particular contracts would be let by way of negotiation.

Organisations which host these Group Hire Minibus Schemes (area-wide community transport schemes) need to fulfil the following criteria in order to be awarded a single tender contract:

- (i) a not for profit organisation able to legally operate mini-buses under Section 19 permits;
- (ii) experience of operating accessible transport;
- (iii) access to a pool of mini-buses (standard and accessible);
- (iv) ability to select, recruit, train and support volunteer drivers;
- (v) ability to deliver MiDAS minibus driver training;
- (vi) able to operate from a local base in the area served by the scheme so that minibuses can be easily collected and returned by hire organisations at minimum costs;
- (vii) ability to deliver support and advise in areas of legislation and good practice to other local voluntary organisations providing transport, eg voluntary care groups, etc;
- (viii) evidence of working in partnership with statutory bodies in delivering services;
- (ix) have a district-wide remit to support, advise and foster the development of voluntary and community activity and well being;

- (x) evidence of good working relationships with voluntary and community groups in the scheme's area of operation; and
- (xi) experience of reaching and working with 'hard to reach' groups.

Only one type of organisation fulfils all the above criteria - the Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS). These organisations also have additional strengths:

- (i) Transport is closely linked to their community development role. If they are working with an organisation to develop voluntary day care provision, they can also provide transport to enable it to happen.
- (ii) Their ability to recruit volunteer drivers is greatly enhanced by the fact that most CVS also run a Volunteer Bureau specifically to recruit and place volunteers.

Where the Group Hire Minibus Schemes are located with their local CVS, then the CVS can be regarded as the specialist suppliers, each being the only organisation able to meet the single tender criteria within the district in which they operate.