

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

|                        |                                                         |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Decision Maker:</b> | Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment |
| <b>Date:</b>           | 26 November 2015                                        |
| <b>Title:</b>          | Community Transport Grant Award for YelaBus             |
| <b>Reference:</b>      | 7107                                                    |
| <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 This report outlines the background and funding history to supporting the YelaBus service in Yateley, reviews current performance, and recommends the award of a grant to YelaBus for 2015/16.

### 2. Future Support to YelaBus

2.1. 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 user groups in order to recover the extra cost of providing a paid driver.

2.2. 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 £6,500 was provided during 2014/15.

2.3. The current funding arrangement with YelaBus came to an end on 31 March 2015. The scheme provides the County Council with quarterly progress reports and these show how the scheme has performed during 2014 in comparison with previous years. The statistics for the key indicators have been included in the table below.

|                               | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>2014</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of Minibus Hires       | 476         | 467         | 495         | 455         |
| Hires using Paid Drivers      | 215         | 187         | 170         | 113         |
| Hires using Volunteer Drivers | 261         | 280         | 325         | 342         |
| Number of Passenger Trips     | 10,450      | 9,402       | 10,136      | 9,066       |

2.4. The above table shows:

- a) A small reduction in the number of minibus hires and passenger trips for 2014 over the previous year. Even though YelaBus report the same number of organisations are using their services this would seem to suggest that some of these organisations are doing so less frequently.
- b) That the annual number of minibus hires provided by YelaBus with volunteer drivers in 2014 increased to 342, which represented 75% of the overall number of hires, as opposed to 66% in 2013, 60% in 2012 and 55% in 2011.

2.5. Given the progress which the scheme has made, it is proposed that a further grant should be offered for 2015/16. The scheme has requested a grant of £11,500 from the County Council although the financial information provided for the period 1 January – 31 December 2014 shows an operating surplus. It is therefore proposed that the County Council should maintain its current level of support for the scheme and that a grant of up to £6,500 be awarded to YelaBus for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

2.6. The contribution made to the scheme through the grant should be seen as a contribution towards the staffing and administration costs involved in operating the scheme so that support for YelaBus would be consistent with the way in which the council supports other similar schemes across the county. In these cases the contribution made by the council usually supports the staffing and administration costs necessary to oversee the operation of a fleet of minibuses, to ensure that these are properly maintained and to enable the recruitment and training of volunteer minibus drivers. The running costs of the minibuses are then recovered through the hire charges to groups. Where paid drivers are used, the cost of this is recovered through the hire charges to user groups.

2.7. The grant would be funded from the Economy, Transport and Environment Other Purposes Grants Stream. This grant stream funds community transport projects or services which benefit the wider community and improve local accessibility whilst excluding any deficits on the operating costs of a minibus

used for group hire (where the income from hires is less than the expenditure on the vehicle). A budget allocation of £30,000 is available for this grant stream in 2015/16 against which this grant would be paid. Four other grants have so far been awarded against this budget totalling £20,500.

2.8. A grant of £6,500 is therefore proposed for YelaBus for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. The council's normal conditions of grant would apply to this award. In addition it is proposed that the grant is awarded to YelaBus on the basis that the following conditions will also be met:

- (i) Provide a 'group hire' minibus operation under Section 19 Standard Permits, issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 (as amended by the provisions in the Local Transport Act 2008), to enable eligible local and voluntary and community groups to hire minibuses at affordable rates.
- (ii) Maintain a pool of volunteer drivers so that minibuses can be provided for hire, complete with a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) trained driver where requested.
- (iii) Ensure that charges made to passengers and vehicle hirers include an element of depreciation so that YelaBus accrues money towards replacing its vehicles.
- (iv) Provide quarterly activity and financial reports to the council for the scheme
- (v) Work with the Council's Community Transport Team on community transport matters in Hart to identify the need for and assist in the development of local community transport initiatives.

2.9 Any future decisions on financial support for YelaBus will need to be considered within the context of the longer term approach for supporting the Minibus Group Hire Schemes in Hampshire which the council is currently developing and it is proposed that YelaBus should be advised of this.

### **3. Conclusion**

3.1. A further grant award is recommended for the YelaBus scheme in Yateley to contribute towards their staffing and administration costs involved in operating this scheme. In addition to the council's normal grant conditions, a number of additional grant conditions are also proposed for this grant award. Any future decisions on financial support for YelaBus will need to be considered within the context of the future approach which the council is currently developing for supporting similar schemes.

### **7. Recommendations**

7.1 That a grant of up to £6,500 be awarded to YelaBus for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, on the basis that, in addition to the Council's normal conditions of grant, the following grant conditions will also be met:

That YelaBus will:

- (i) Provide a 'group hire' minibus operation under Section 19 Standard Permits to enable eligible local and voluntary and community groups to hire minibuses at affordable rates.
- (ii) Maintain a pool of volunteer drivers so that minibuses can be provided for hire, complete with a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) trained driver where requested.
- (iii) Ensure that charges made to passengers and vehicle hirers include an element of depreciation so that YelaBus accrues money towards replacing its vehicles.
- (iv) Provide quarterly activity and financial reports to the Council for the scheme.
- (v) Work with the Council's Community Transport Team on community transport matters in Hart to identify the need for and assist in the development of local community transport initiatives.

7.2 That YelaBus should be advised that any future decisions on financial support for their scheme will need to be considered within the context of the longer term approach to supporting the Minibus Group Hire Schemes in Hampshire which the council is currently developing.

**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 Duty**

1.1 The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2 Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives.

It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures. The expectation is that maintaining grant support to YelaBus at the 2014/15 level should enable the current service provision to be maintained and that therefore there should be no negative impact on service users as a result of the recommendations in this report.

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

- 2.1 Some of the services will support wider community involvement which can help to reduce crime.

**3. Climate Change:**

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

The YelaBus scheme can provide group transit journeys, thus reducing some individual journeys which may have otherwise taken place.

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

As sustainable modes of transport become more important in mitigating climate change, the proposal enables the continued provision of a travel option for users of those services provided by YelaBus which is in keeping with the need to reduce carbon emissions.