

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	30 June 2016
Title:	Community Transport Grant Applications
Reference:	7479
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background to the three Community Rail Partnerships in Hampshire and recommends grant awards for each Partnership in order to continue supporting their activities during 2016/17.
- 1.2 The report also 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 2016/17.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1 The County Council has previously provided grant support to three community Rail Partnerships in Hampshire – The East Hants Community Rail Partnership, the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, and the Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership. All three of the rail Partnerships are part funded from other sources e.g. rail operators and other local authorities.
- 2.2 The Partnerships aim to improve travel choices for Hampshire’s residents through working together to improve rail services and facilities which will lead to greater use of local rail stations. They also encourage co-operative working between National Park Authorities, other local authorities, train companies, businesses and local volunteers.
- 2.3 Since 2006, the County Council has provided grant support to YelaBus, a long established organisation providing mini-buses for groups in Yateley, which is well regarded locally. YelaBus received substantial Lottery grant funding between 2000-2006 which enabled the scheme to employ paid drivers without the need to pass these costs on to the users of their vehicles. Other similar 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. Previous financial support from the County Council has enabled the scheme to make the transition to working as other schemes do, with greater use of volunteers or full recovery of paid driver costs, and more recent grant awards have supported the scheme on the same basis as other similar schemes in the county.

3. The East Hants Community Rail Partnership Grant Application

- 3.1 The East Hants Community Rail Partnership was formed in 2013 and covers the rail stations at Liphook, Liss, Petersfield and Rowlands Castle, all of which are gateways providing sustainable access to the South Downs National Park.
- 3.2 The Partnership Steering Group includes Hampshire County Council, South Downs National Park Authority, East Hampshire District Council, South West Trains, and the Department for Transport. The Steering Group is also supported by the Community Rail Partnership Officer (external to Hampshire County Council), and by other local groups and local authorities, e.g. Petersfield Transport Group, Havant Borough Council, Sustrans, Rowlands Castle Parish Council and Liss Parish Council.
- 3.3 The application received from the East Hants Partnership states that any grant from Hampshire County Council would be used to assist with the costs of undertaking the following activities:
 - a) Publicise rail travel opportunities along the route covered by the East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership route through the preparation and publication of regular e-bulletins, printed and web based travel guides, attending local community groups, fetes, meetings and exhibitions. The Partnership will develop volunteer community groups around stations and work with stakeholders to identify social, transport, economic and infrastructure opportunities, and implement as much as possible. This will include small scale infrastructure provision, implementation of rail-bus links, onward cycle promotion, provision of walks from stations, art at stations, celebratory events, and policy and franchise discussions with all levels of rail industry, local, and national government.
 - b) The Partnership will bring together local community groups, environmental and social groups, and educational establishments, by encouraging the use of rail from country stations whilst encouraging one-off and on-going enhancements to stations carried out by these groups. Through this it is anticipated that there will be additional rail users encouraged onto the network; there will also be a reduction in crime levels and anti-social behaviour around stations, and increased community cohesion in areas where projects are undertaken. Overall, a more sustainable and better railway will be created which will increase accessibility, improve local economies and, most importantly, develop

the county's sustainable tourism industry in association with the South Downs National Park.

- 3.4 The East Hants Community Rail Partnership has requested a grant of £3,000 from the County Council towards their estimated running costs of £21,950 for 2016/17. The remaining costs are expected to be covered through contributions from the South Downs National Park, South West Trains, East Hampshire District Council, and the Association of Community Rail Partnerships. A grant of £3,000 was provided during 2015/16 and a further grant award of £3,000 is recommended for the East Hants Community Rail Partnership to assist with their running costs for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

4. The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Grant Application

- 4.1 The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership was formed in 2007. The area covered by this Partnership includes the Romsey – Salisbury rail service via Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway and Southampton Central, and the stations at Bursledon, Netley and Hamble.
- 4.2 The Partnership Steering Group includes Hampshire County Council, South West Trains, First Great Western Trains, Network Rail, Test Valley Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, and Southampton City Council. The Steering Group is again supported by the Community Rail Partnership Officer and by a number of volunteer groups at stations along the line.
- 4.3 The County Council owns Chandler's Ford station and it is leased to South West Trains. This station benefits from a number of the projects run by this Community Rail Partnership. The station opened in 2003, and passenger numbers have increased considerably from approximately 155,000 in 2004/05 to 231,912 in 2014/15 (latest available figures).
- 4.4 The application received from the Three Rivers Partnership states that any grant from Hampshire County Council would be used to assist with the costs of undertaking the following activities:
- a) Publicise rail travel opportunities along the Three Rivers Community rail partnership route through the preparation and publication of regular e-bulletins, printed and web based travel guides, attending local community groups, fetes, meetings and exhibitions. The Partnership will develop volunteer community groups around stations and work with stakeholders to identify social, transport, economic and infrastructure opportunities, and implement as much as possible. This will include small scale infrastructure provision, implementation of rail-bus links, onward cycle promotion, provision of walks from stations, art at stations, celebratory events and policy and franchise discussions with all levels of rail industry, local and national government.

- b) The Partnership will bring together local community groups, scouts, environmental and social groups, and schools including excluded pupil departments, by encouraging the use of rail from urban and country stations whilst encouraging one-off and on-going enhancements to stations carried out by these groups. Through this it is anticipated that there will be additional rail users encouraged onto the network, a reduction in anti-social behaviour around stations, and increased community cohesion in areas where projects are undertaken. The Partnership will also continue to encourage the introduction and promotion of bus links to outlying destinations from stations not normally connected to public transport, allowing elderly, young and disabled persons to access visitor attractions.
- c) Regular station surveys will be undertaken to measure the success of initiatives and to help determine the future needs and aspirations of users and groups, which in turn will be used to liaise with the relevant train operator or Network Rail for their consideration.

4.5 The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership has requested a grant of £7,000 from the County Council towards their estimated running costs of £33,500 for 2016/17. The remaining costs are expected to be covered through contributions from rail companies, Eastleigh Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, Test Valley Borough Council, Southampton City Council, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, and revenue from facilities provided at local stations e.g. the café facility at Chandler's Ford station. A grant of £7,000 was provided during 2015/16 and a further grant award of £7,000 is recommended for the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership to assist with their running costs during 2016/17 for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

5. The Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership Grant Application

- 5.1 The Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership was formed in 2008 and the route covered by this Partnership is the Lymington Pier – Lymington Town - Brockenhurst branch line.
- 5.2 The Partnership Steering Group includes Hampshire County Council, South West Trains, Network Rail, Wightlink Ferries, Go South Coast Bus Company, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority and Brockenhurst Parish Council. The Steering Group is again supported by the Community Rail Partnership Officer and by the volunteer group, Friends of Lymington-Brockenhurst Line, who cover all three stations on the line.
- 5.3 The application received from the Lymington-Brockenhurst Partnership states that any grant from Hampshire County Council would be used to assist with the costs of undertaking the following activities:

- a) Bring together local partners, transport operators, community and volunteer groups and local schools and colleges to encourage and sustain the use of a vital branch line rail link serving the New Forest National Park, and to and from the ferry to the Isle of Wight for the benefit of local residents, commuters, tourists and students.
 - b) Publicise rail travel opportunities along the Lymington-Brockenhurst branch line through social media updates e.g. Facebook and a website; production of an Inn Line guide together with a Line Guide with local walks; organisation of special celebratory events at the rail stations; small scale infrastructure provision; music at stations; regeneration of the Lymington Town station building; provision of walks from stations; art at stations; production of TravelSafe, a film to highlight the dangers for young people of wearing headphones whilst on stations; annual attendance with music and publicity at Community Rail in City Day at Waterloo; and policy and franchise discussions with all levels of rail industry, and local and national government.
- 5.4 The Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership has requested a grant of £10,000 from the County Council towards their estimated running costs of £25,780 for 2016/17. The remaining costs are expected to be covered through contributions from transport operators, South West Trains, New Forest National Park, New Forest District Council, and Brockenhurst Parish Council. A grant of £10,000 was provided during 2015/16 and a further grant award of £10,000 is recommended for the Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership to assist with their running costs for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

6 YelaBus Grant Award

- 6.1 YelaBus is a local community transport provider which aims to provide accessible and affordable transport for those in the Yateley area who do not have the use of a private car and who cannot access public transport. The scheme operates two accessible minibuses and their overall costs are met through grants from the County Council and Yateley Town Council, income from users of the service, and fund raising.
- 6.2 A grant of £6,500 was provided to the scheme during 2015/16. The grant is seen as a contribution towards the staffing and administration costs involved in operating the scheme so that support for YelaBus is consistent with the way in which the council supports other similar schemes across the county. In these cases the contribution made by the council 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.

6.3 A grant application for £6,500 has been received from YelaBus as a contribution towards their costs for 2016/17. A further grant award of £6,500 is therefore proposed for the scheme. 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 County 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.

6.4 Any future decisions on financial support for YelaBus will need to be considered within the context of the future operating model which the County Council is looking to develop with regard to how it supports the community transport sector in the future, and it is proposed that YelaBus should be advised of this.

7. Financial

7.1 The grants proposed in this report would be funded under the Economy, Transport, and Environment Community Transport Grants Stream. This grant stream is available to voluntary and community organisations that provide a transport service to the wider community. It can be used to support community transport projects or services which benefit the wider community and improve local accessibility.

7.2 This grant stream has a budget allocation of £30,000 for 2016/17 none of which has yet been awarded. The total cost of the grants proposed in this report total £26,500 and these can be funded from the available grant stream budget allocation.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The County Council has previously provided grant support to three community Rail Partnerships in Hampshire – The East Hants Community Rail Partnership, the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, and the Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership. The Partnerships aim to improve travel choices for Hampshire’s residents through working together to improve rail services and facilities which will lead to greater use of local rail stations. Further grants for each of these Partnerships are recommended to assist with their running costs during 2016/17.
- 8.2 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 County 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.
- 8.3 The grants proposed in this report total £26,500 and these can be funded from the available budget allocation in the Economy, Transport, and Environment Community Transport Grants Stream.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That a grant of £3,000 be awarded to the East Hants Community Rail Partnership to contribute towards its operating costs as detailed in the grant application for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
- 9.2 That a grant of £7,000 be awarded to the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership to contribute towards its operating costs as detailed in the grant application for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
- 9.3 That a grant of £10,000 be awarded to the Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership to contribute towards its operating costs as detailed in the grant application for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
- 9.4 That a grant of £6,500 be awarded to YelaBus for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, 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, 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.
- 9.5 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 similar schemes in Hampshire which the council is currently developing.

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

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Community Transport Other Purposes Grant Application	6804	9 July 2015
Community Transport Grant Award for YelaBus	7107	26 November 2015

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality 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 impact on groups with protected characteristics will be low as the grant funding will help to provide an improved environment at a number of Hampshire's rail stations, provide better access to rail stations (e.g. cycle parking, bus interchange improvements), and provide community events promoting sustainable transport, especially rail services. It is not anticipated that there will be a greater impact on any particular section of the community as all residents, employees and visitors close to the rail stations concerned will benefit from these grants.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The provision of improved rail station facilities and busier rail stations can improve feelings of personal security particularly for lone travellers.

Some of the services provided by YelaBus will support wider community involvement which can help to reduce crime.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does the proposal impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Increased use of rail services as opposed to the private car helps to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from transport.

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

- 3.2. How does the proposal consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The Community Rail Partnerships promote sustainable modes of transport and in this respect play a role in helping Hampshire's residents and visitors to adapt to climate change and to the need to further mitigate climate change.

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.