

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2013
<b>Title:</b>	Government Funding for Community Transport
<b>Reference:</b>	4779
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The report sets out the progress which has been made during 2012/13 in implementing a number of initiatives approved by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport using the additional funding which the Government has made available to support Community Transport services in Hampshire.
- 1.2. The report also sets out proposals for how this funding should be used during 2013/14. In many cases these build on the successful work programme which was approved and has been implemented during 2012/13. The proposals again offer a range of measures which should empower the community transport sector and local communities to play a greater role in meeting local transport needs.

#### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1 The government has provided additional funding to local authorities that received Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to encourage the development of Community Transport. Hampshire County Council received a grant of £269,580 which has been available to support new initiatives during 2012/13. A second grant for the same amount was subsequently received from the government and it was agreed that this would be used to implement initiatives during 2013/14.
- 2.2 Whilst the government has taken the view that it is for each authority to determine how best to use this funding there was an expectation that councils would not use the extra funding to displace planned expenditure on community transport and supported bus services. The balance of capital and revenue expenditure was also a matter for each authority to determine.

2.3 In putting together proposals on how this money could be used the following were taken into consideration:

- (i) Given the time limited nature of the funding any proposals should not require ongoing revenue support;
- (ii) Hampshire already has a well developed and diverse community transport sector;
- (iii) a desire to build on outputs from the Community Transport Review which identified further opportunities to support, develop and build capacity within the sector; and
- (iv) the need to enable the community transport sector to play a greater role in filling any gaps which were left by the review of local bus services.

2.4 There was also a desire to see a community transport sector in Hampshire which offers safe and good quality transport services which are accessible to those people who have no alternative mode of travel. These services also need to offer flexibility and value for money and, in the case of the larger operators, play an increasing role in the delivery of passenger transport services which the County Council requires.

2.5 Given all of the above it was agreed that the additional Government grant would be used to encourage the development of community transport in the five following areas:

(i) Building capacity within the community transport sector

If the potential for the community transport sector to play a greater role in the delivery of passenger transport services is to be realised then measures to build capacity need to be considered. Community transport is often well placed to provide local flexible and low cost services.

(ii) Raising standards in the community transport sector

If the community transport sector is to play a greater role in the wider delivery of passenger transport services then there is a need to ensure that appropriate skills and expertise are being developed and applied to the delivery of services.

(iii) Promoting and supporting local transport initiatives

Encourage and support local communities which take a responsibility for solving their own local transport issues whilst also supporting key existing projects.

(iv) Enabling the community transport sector to play a greater role in providing passenger transport services

Exploring alternative service delivery options which may provide further opportunities for community transport operators to play a greater role in providing passenger transport services and promote greater financial sustainability for schemes longer term.

(v) Improving the promotion of community transport services

There is a need to make people aware of the scope of community transport services available in Hampshire. Equally there is a desire to ensure that the County Council receives the appropriate recognition for the support which it provides to the community transport sector and for those services which it directly contracts.

2.6 The Executive Member for Environment and Transport agreed that the additional government funding for community transport should be used to implement a number of measures which support the areas mentioned above at the decision day on 8 November 2011.

### **3. Progress on Implementing Measures During 2012/13**

3.1. The following progress has been made on implementing the measures agreed by the Executive Member during 2012/13.

Setting up additional voluntary car schemes in partnership with the Good Neighbour Support Service

3.2. The council provided additional support of £10,500 to the Good Neighbour Support Service to encourage the setting up of new voluntary car schemes (Good Neighbours groups) in areas where a need has been identified. In some cases this also looked at the scope for extending existing groups to either cover new areas or offer an increased level of service e.g. providing social journeys in addition to health journeys.

The following progress has been made:

- i) Froxfield now has a service for health transport. This has been achieved by extending the transport service operated by Petersfield Voluntary Care Group, with a view to forming a new Froxfield Good Neighbours Group in the future.
- ii) Hartley Wintney Voluntary Care Group has agreed to extend their voluntary car scheme to cover Winchfield.
- iii) Stockbridge Neighbour Care has extended its voluntary car scheme to cover both Longstock and Houghton.

- iv) Bishops Waltham Good Neighbours has extended its service to provide for social journeys.
- v) A Good Neighbours social transport initiative is being developed in Alton in partnership with Carers Together, Age Concern Hampshire and Brendon Care. A new voluntary group called Alton Out and About is currently being set up. Volunteers are now being recruited for this.
- vi) Work is currently underway with new volunteers in Froyle to set up a group to provide social journeys for local residents. A new group, Froyle Good Neighbours, is currently in the process of being set up and will operate alongside the existing Binsted Bentley Froyle and District Voluntary Care group that provides health journeys.

3.3. There are also a number of other areas where work to explore the feasibility of either setting up a new scheme, or extending an existing scheme is already underway and where more time is needed to complete this work. In addition to this other areas have been explored but work later abandoned either because there was not considered to be a need for a scheme or because there was insufficient support and volunteers available to set a scheme up.

#### Volunteer Driver Recruitment

3.4. In partnership with the voluntary sector the council set out to develop and manage a short term project aimed at proactively recruiting volunteers for community transport schemes in order to build capacity within the sector.

3.5. The following progress has been made:

- i) Good quality publicity material has been produced aimed at recruiting both voluntary car and minibus drivers. Display boards have also been produced which have been displayed at a range of locations throughout Hampshire.
- ii) The volunteer driver recruitment campaign was launched at the Minibus Event (see below) in September.
- iii) A specific website has been set up to promote the campaign which has had 1,200 views .
- iv) Various media initiatives and local events have taken place to promote the recruitment campaign.
- v) Free advertising space has been secured at the main motorway service stations in Hampshire to promote the campaign during February 2013.
- vi) Information on the need for volunteer drivers will feature in future Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Constabulary pre-retirement courses.

- 3.6. The statistics show that the Hampshire Volunteer Centres have so far received 102 enquiries (up to 28 February 2013) from members of the public about volunteer driving. After the initial enquiry people are referred to individual transport schemes. The Volunteer Centres will be tracking these people in order to establish how many prospective recruits actually end up driving.
- 3.7. Given that some people may go direct to transport organisations and that others need to hear about something a number of times before they respond to an appeal, it may not be possible to quantify the full effect of this volunteer driver recruitment campaign. Feedback on the campaign would suggest that this is highlighting the need for more volunteers and the role of community transport in Hampshire generally.

#### Hampshire Minibus Event

- 3.8. In partnership with Hampshire Transport Management the Community Transport Team have organised a minibus exhibition and training event for community groups and schools that own or use minibuses. The Minibus Event was held at the Hampshire Court Hotel in Basingstoke on Wednesday 19 September. It combined a range of training and briefing sessions throughout the day, with exhibitors showcasing the best in accessible minibuses and specialist equipment, and expert advice on-hand from the County Council's Community Transport team.
- 3.9. The outdoor exhibition area hosted 15 minibuses from a range of different companies and this provided an excellent opportunity for organisations to compare the products of some of the UK's leading converters of accessible minibuses. An internal exhibition hall was home to suppliers including wheelchair restraint equipment manufacturers, leasing specialists, software suppliers and CTA UK, the national body that represents the community transport sector. Hampshire County Council also had its own stands, with Road Safety providing vision screening, Hampshire Transport Management providing advice on minibus leasing and maintenance, as well as the Community Transport team's own stand, with advice and expertise at the ready.
- 3.10. Feedback on the day, from both delegates and exhibitors, was very positive with many saying that they would attend a similar event if this was held again in the future. The choice of venue and the level of training provided proved popular among both delegates and exhibitors with many saying that they found the day very helpful and beneficial. It is believed that some 200 people attended the event on the day.
- 3.11. Given the above it is proposed that the Hampshire Court Hotel should be booked for a repeat event in June 2014. This venue was chosen after looking at a number of potential venues throughout the county and was considered to offer overall the most suitable facilities for staging indoor and outdoor exhibitions whilst also being able to offer a wide range of training and briefing

sessions. Many of the Hampshire venues considered could not offer this range of facilities during a term time week day.

Community Transport Training

- 3.12. A programme of training courses has been organised for people involved in setting up and operating community transport services. The training programme has been designed to provide specific training for community transport operators on the legal and best practice elements of operating a high quality community transport service.
- 3.13. The first training sessions were held at the Hampshire Minibus Event. The training and briefing sessions held at this event covered a cross-section of subjects including driver licensing, Minibuses and the Law, Buying and Leasing a Minibus and “Five Steps to Safety” – how to safely evacuate a minibus if it catches fire. A total of 207 places were taken up at the training and briefings provided at the Minibus Event. A further round of briefing and training sessions took place during March 2013.
- 3.14. In addition to the government funding received the County Council has also been entitled to consultancy time from the Community Transport Association to the value of £2,500. This has been used to employ the Community Transport Association to run a number of the above training courses.

Minibus Operator’s Manual

- 3.15. A training manual for operators was proposed which would complement the existing MiDAS training materials which organisations have for assessing and training their own minibus drivers. Given the number of measures being pursued this is one area which was given a lower priority for development. Whilst an outline has been developed for a manual this continues to be a work in progress.

Transport Challenge Fund

- 3.16. A Transport Challenge Fund was established to help local communities to develop and implement their own solutions to local transport needs. The Challenge Fund was particularly seen as a help for those parish councils and other community based organisations which wished to pilot new initiatives after using the Transport Self-help kit which the council has produced.
- 3.17. The number of applications to the Challenge Fund has been lower than was initially expected. The following applications were supported from the fund during 2012/13:

Organisation	Amount	Purpose
Bishops Waltham Parish Council	£750	To produce a Bishop’s Waltham Travel Information Guide to be delivered to all houses and businesses in the parish and surrounding areas
Lyndhurst Parish	£750	The design and production of an

Council		information leaflet showing all the options for public and community based transport in Lyndhurst
Fawley Parish Council	£9360	To enable the purchase of an accessible minibus by Fawley Parish Council to ensure that the services provided by the community bus will be available and accessible by the wider community
Andover Town Council	£1,000	To produce and distribute publicity materials to recruit additional volunteer drivers which will be used to establish a new door-to-door transport service in the Andover Town centre

### Vehicle Purchase

- 3.18. A Grants Programme for Community Transport Group Hire Minibus Schemes and village minibuses to help with the purchase of new or replacement minibuses was planned. However, this grants programme was deferred in order to enable a discussion on a future vehicle replacement strategy for the council to take place.

### Business Development of Community Transport Schemes

- 3.19. It was proposed to offer designated support to one or more schemes as part of a targeted initiative to increase the scope of work and the journey opportunities provided by district-wide Community Transport Group Hire Minibus Schemes supported by the County Council. This aims to increase trip productivity and involvement in contract work and offer practical guidance towards the adoption of a trading ethos to help promote greater financial sustainability for schemes in the longer term.
- 3.20. Consultants, the TAS Partnership, were commissioned to undertake this work following a procurement process. The work at the scheme based at Community First New Forest is expected to be completed by 31 March 2013. Subject to the results of this business development work, this exercise will be repeated at three further schemes, Eastleigh, Test Valley and Winchester, who have each expressed an interest in receiving this support.

### Website Improvements

- 3.21. One of the measures involved making improvements to the community transport information currently held on the Passenger Transport Group's website. Following recent budget reductions a number of community transport information publications are no longer being printed. Consequently, there is an increasing need to modernise the website to improve the usability for members of the public who may be looking for information about community transport services.

- 3.22. The Community Transport pages on the website have now been redesigned and made live with feedback on the new look website being sought. The information previously held in the 'Getting About Guides' is now presented on the website in a new format and visitors to the website are now able to print out relevant information in their own personalised travel booklet using the County Council's 'Piper' system.

#### Promotion and Marketing

- 3.23. Promotional and marketing initiatives were planned to help better promote services for users and reinforce the profile of funding from stakeholders. Now that the new community transport contracts have been awarded work will commence on converting all Dial-A-Ride services to Call and Go and on adopting a more common approach to vehicle livery and the publicity used for these services. The approach for the Minibus Group Hire Schemes will be looked at as part of the discussions on the council's future vehicle replacement strategy for these schemes.

#### **4. Measures Proposed for 2013/14**

- 4.1. The following measures are proposed for 2013/14. In many cases these represent a continuation and progression of the initiatives which have already commenced during 2012/13:

- (i) Setting up further voluntary car schemes or extending existing voluntary car schemes in partnership with the Good Neighbour Support Service. It is proposed that a further payment of £10,500 be awarded to the Good Neighbour Support Service for this purpose through the single tender which this organisation has with the council.
- (ii) Continue co-ordinating and developing the volunteer driver recruitment campaign in partnership with the voluntary sector. This will include plans to produce a number of short film clips to help with recruitment both locally and through social media outlets. Other methods of advertising, including using the back of buses will also be explored.
- (iii) Provide a programme of community transport training and briefing sessions throughout the year.
- (iv) Make arrangements for a second Hampshire minibus event to be held at the Hampshire Court Hotel in Basingstoke in June 2014.
- (v) Produce a Minibus Operator's Manual for community transport operators.
- (vi) Provide a Transport Challenge Fund, initially of £10,000, to help local communities develop and implement their own solutions to local transport needs.
- (vii) Utilise some of the funding to pump prime the strategy which is to be agreed regarding the future replacement of vehicles at the Community Transport Minibus Group Hire Schemes.
- (viii) Provide designated support for at least three further Community Transport Minibus Group Hire Schemes subject to the results of the support given to the first scheme. It is also proposed that further

financial assistance should be made available to these schemes to help them implement the results of the consultants study.

- (ix) Finalise improvements to the community transport pages on the Passenger Transport website and as a second stage to this work review and make improvements to the community transport searches on the website.
- (x) Implement promotional and marketing initiatives which will help to better promote services for users and reinforce the profile of funding from stakeholders. This will include converting all Dial-A-Ride services to Call and Go and adopting a more common approach to vehicle livery and publicity for these services. The approach for the Minibus Group Hire Schemes will be looked at as part of the discussions on the council's future vehicle replacement strategy for these schemes.

## **5. Funding**

- 5.1. The County Council received a grant of £269,580 which has been used to assist in implementing initiatives during 2012/13. A sum of £85,000 has been used during this period to support initiatives.
- 5.2 The Government has previously confirmed that there are no timescale restrictions for using this funding and that any carry over of funding between financial years is a local matter. It is proposed therefore to carry forward the sum of £184,580 to be used during 2013/14 to implement the initiatives outlined in this report for this period. This will be added to the second grant of £269,580 which has been received from the government to support community transport which will also be available during 2013/14.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to utilise this government funding during 2013/14 to implement any additional initiatives which may be identified which support the areas set out in 2.5 of the report.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1. The report sets out the progress which has been made during 2012/13 in implementing a number of proposals using the additional one-off funding which the Government has made available to support Community Transport services in Hampshire.
- 6.2. The report also sets out proposals for how this funding should be used during 2013/14. These proposals again offer a programme of measures which should empower the community transport sector and local communities to play a greater role in meeting local transport needs. Funding will again be allocated across each of the five development areas identified.
- 6.3. The government has confirmed that there are no timescale restrictions for using this funding and that any carry over of funding between financial years is a local matter. It is proposed therefore to carry forward the funds remaining from

2012/13 and use these along with the further grant received from the government during 2013/14.

## **7. Recommendations**

7.1 That the additional government funding for community transport be used during 2013/14 to continue implementing the following initiatives which are detailed in Section 4.1 of this report:

- (i) Set up or extend voluntary car schemes in partnership with the Good Neighbour Support Service with a further payment of £10,500 being made through a variation to the current contract with the Good Neighbour Support Service.
- (ii) Co-ordinate and develop the volunteer driver recruitment campaign in partnership with the voluntary sector.
- (iii) Plan for a second Hampshire Minibus Event to be held at the Hampshire Court Hotel in Basingstoke in June 2014.
- (iv) Provide a programme of community transport training and briefing sessions for community transport operators.
- (v) Produce a Minibus Operator's Manual for community transport operators.
- (vi) Provide a Transport Challenge Fund, with an initial budget allocation of £10,000, to help local communities develop and implement their own solutions to local transport needs.
- (vii) Implement a strategy for replacing vehicles at Community Transport Minibus Group Hire Schemes.
- (viii) Provide designated business support to at least three further Community Transport Minibus Group Hire Schemes subject to the results of the support given to the first scheme.
- (ix) Provide financial assistance for schemes implementing the results of the business support provided by consultants.
- (x) Finalise improvements to the community transport pages on the Passenger Transport website and review and improve the community transport searches.
- (xi) Implement promotional and marketing initiatives which better promote community transport services for users and reinforce the profile of funding from stakeholders.

7.2 That the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to utilise the government funding during 2013/14 to implement any further initiatives which may be identified and which support the five areas set out in 2.5 of the report.

**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 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. An assessment of the impacts in this service area can be found at [Safe and efficient transport systems in Hampshire](#).

1.2 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 proposed services should offer improved transport opportunities for the local community.

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

2.1. Many community transport schemes offer services, including transport for youth groups, which will support wider community involvement which can help to reduce crime.

### **3. Climate Change:**

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

Use of demand responsive transport services and group transport reflects users requirements 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?

In a changing context in which sustainable modes of transport become more and more important to mitigating climate change, the proposals provide travel options for individuals and groups which are in keeping with the need to reduce carbon emissions.