

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member - Environment
Date of Decision:	12 January 2010
Decision Title:	Community Transport Vehicle Grants
Decision Reference:	1180
Report From:	Director of Environment

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1. Executive Summary

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

1.2. This paper seeks to:

- outline the background to providing vehicle grants
- report on the grant applications which have been received and outline the criteria against which these have been assessed
- recommend grant awards
- propose a carry forward of funding to 2010/11.

2. Contextual information

2.1. A review of community transport schemes in Hampshire was undertaken in 1999. One particular issue identified was that of future vehicle funding arrangements. If schemes are to continue to offer accessible vehicles and transport at affordable rates, thus enhancing social inclusion, there is a need to provide assistance to meet increasing capital costs. These vehicles generally offer older, disabled and younger people the opportunity to access a range of services and facilities within their local community.

2.2. The need to develop the community transport sector was identified in both the Passenger Transport Group and cross-cutting transport Best Value Review action plans. Previous work has also recommended a framework for the

future development and funding of community transport in Hampshire. This involved developing a needs assessment which has determined what the baseline level of community transport provision should be in each district of Hampshire, together with the required levels of resources and funding.

- 2.3. The County Council has been making funding available through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme to support and develop community transport services which support the LTP objectives of accessibility and social inclusion. Services provided by community transport schemes include group hire, dial-a-ride, wheels to work schemes and shopping trip services for older and disabled people. These services can make a key contribution towards enhancing accessibility and reducing isolation, particularly in rural areas, for those people or families who do not have access to their own transport. Often these services can be provided in areas and at times when it may not be feasible or cost-effective to provide a conventional bus service, thus helping to sustain present travel opportunities whilst making use of alternative approaches.
- 2.4. In addition, many of these alternative approaches will be provided with smaller vehicles, thus reducing vehicle impact on the environment. The demand-responsive nature of some services, particularly where these provide a door-to-door transport service, could also offer some reassurance to those people who may have concerns about personal safety on conventional public transport. Supporting the opportunities for more group transport movements may also potentially lead to lower car usage.

3. Criteria for Grants

- 3.1. The allocation of grants to community transport schemes is being based on the following principles:
 - (i) The number of community transport vehicles already available in the district or borough and the extent to which these meet the needs of the community. In some cases this will mean that grants may be prioritised to provide additional vehicles, whilst in others the priority may be to replace current vehicles in order to sustain existing community transport schemes.
 - (ii) Whether the grant will help to increase opportunities to develop the community transport sector as a whole by filling gaps in provision.
 - (iii) To what extent the grant will help achieve Hampshire's aims of improving accessibility and well-being; and what contribution the vehicle could make to the delivery of passenger transport services.
 - (iv) How well used the vehicle will be and how many local groups will make use of it on a regular basis.
 - (v) The provision of grants to as many schemes as possible, with emphasis on those that have received little support in recent years.

- (vi) Where the grant requested is for a replacement vehicle, priority will generally be given to those vehicles approaching the end of their economic life, based on a combination of age, mileage, condition and suitability.
- (vii) Priority will also be given to those applications where at least 25% of the cost of the vehicle has been raised from other sources. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider the award of a grant for more than 75% of the purchase cost of a vehicle.

3.2. The availability of this grant money has been advertised on the County Council's website and applications have been sought from voluntary and community organisations who can meet the criteria below. The district wide group hire schemes were also notified of the funding which was available. An insert about the grant scheme was also placed in copies of the latest edition of Community Transport News sent to organisations in the county operating minibuses.

3.3. Suitable applicants were required to:

- (i) be an existing voluntary or community organisation which already provides a transport service to the wider community;
- (ii) be already operating vehicles which provide a service for the wider community rather than for a specific activity, group or purpose;
- (iii) be able to provide evidence of the need for a new or replacement vehicle;
- (iv) be able to demonstrate that the use of the new or replacement vehicle will:
 - (a) support the Local Transport Plan objectives of improving accessibility and social inclusion;
 - (b) foster the development of voluntary and community organisations in their area of operation and improve well-being; and
 - (c) support the provision and development of community transport activities in Hampshire;
- (v) be in need of financial support for a new or replacement vehicle; and
- (vi) be able to provide evidence of vehicle purchase costs and any other sources of funding towards the vehicle.

4. Vehicle Grant Applications

4.1. Appropriate grant applications have been received from the following organisations:

Organisation	Grant requested £
Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus	19,684
One Community*	31,234
One Community*	31,234
Havant Council of Community Service	40,638
Test Valley Community Services	18,665
Test Valley Community Services	50,000
Locks Heath Communicare	5,000
YelaBus	40,000
Total value of requests	236,455

* Grant applications have been received from One Community to replace two vehicles.

4.2. Details on these grant applications and how they have been assessed against the criteria can be found in Appendix 1. A further application was received from Winchester Area Community Action for the replacement of a dial-a-ride vehicle. The county and city councils already both make annual contributions to a vehicle replacement reserve for the specific purpose of replacing the Winchester Dial-A-Ride vehicles. Under the new Dial-A-Ride contract arrangements these vehicles are now owned by the council and a grant application from Winchester Area Community Action does not meet the criteria for vehicle grants.

5. Outline of Options

5.1. A decision needs to be made on which grants should be supported and the following options exist:

5.2. **Option 1:** Provide vehicle grants to all of the organisations which have submitted applications. This would exceed the funding which is currently available.

- Risk Assessment: This would provide a grant to one voluntary organisation whose longer term funding strategy is currently being developed. It would

also provide funding to one organisation which does not meet the criteria set out for vehicle grants.

5.3. **Option 2:** Provide vehicle grants to all of the organisations which have submitted appropriate applications with the exception of YelaBus. The proposed grant awards can be met from within the available budgets.

- Risk Assessment: This would allow more time for YelaBus to develop and implement a longer term funding strategy and improvement plan with the support of officers. The vehicle grant application could then be reconsidered at a later date as part of this process once the longer term funding situation is more clear.

5.4. **Option 3:** Provide no grant support to any of the organisations which have submitted applications for vehicle grants.

- Risk Assessment: The community transport allocation in the Local Transport Plan would remain unallocated. This may result in nominated schemes incurring higher operating costs than they would have otherwise incurred and in opportunities for developing new services being lost, making the maintenance of existing services difficult.

6. Options Analysis/Comparison

6.1. Option 2 is seen as the preferred way forward. Conditions will be applied to these grants. This will ensure that vehicles comply with all necessary legal and safety requirements and are used in a manner which is compatible with the overall objectives set out in the Community Transport Strategy. The conditions will also cover those situations where either the organisation is disbanded or the vehicle is disposed of and not replaced. The operating cost of these vehicles once purchased will be covered by the community transport schemes themselves. The costs will be recovered through hire charges to organisations or individuals using the vehicles and income from contracts for providing specific services.

7. Finance

7.1. There is an allocation of £250,000 in the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme for 2009/10. The grants recommended amount to £196,455 leaving a balance of £53,545. It is proposed that a sum of £50,000 be carried forward to 2010/11 to allow this grant programme to continue. This would provide an option for reconsidering the grant application from YelaBus when the longer term funding arrangements for this service are clearer.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That £19,684 be awarded to the Broughton and Mottisfont Community Bus Scheme towards the purchase of a minibus.
- 8.2. That a grant of £62,468 be awarded to One Community towards the purchase of two accessible minibuses.
- 8.3. That a grant of £5,000 be awarded to the Locks Heath Community Association towards the purchase of an accessible minibus.
- 8.4. That a grant of £40,638 be awarded to Havant Council of Community Service towards the purchase of an accessible minibus.
- 8.5. That a grant of £18,665 be awarded to Test Valley Community Services towards the purchase of a small wheelchair accessible minibus.
- 8.6. That a grant of £50,000 be awarded to Test Valley Community Services towards the purchase of an accessible minibus.
- 8.7. That a sum of £50,000 be carried forward to 2010/11 to allow this grant programme to continue.

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

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

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

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

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

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

3. Climate Change:

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

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

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

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

Local Transport Plan Capital Programme Community Transport Grant Awards 2009

Proposed Grants

Organisation	Amount Requested	% funding of total vehicle cost	Comments	Criteria for awarding grants (see page 2 for details)						
				(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)
1. Broughton & Mottisfont Bus	£19,684	58%	A replacement vehicle to enable continuation of transport services for local residents to enhance quality of life through access to key services. Service include weekly and monthly scheduled trips to local key towns as well as hiring by local community groups for transport related activity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. One Community	£31,234.	49%	A replacement vehicle available to hire for regular bookings including shopping trips, lunch clubs, evening and weekend outings for the wider community.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3. One Community	£31,234	49%	A replacement vehicle available to hire for regular bookings including shopping trips, lunch clubs, evening and weekend outings for the wider community.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Locks Heath Communicare	£5000	13%	A replacement vehicle to support community transport provision in the local area, including local trips to lunch clubs, shopping trips and other trips to key services.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Organisation	Amount Requested	% funding of total vehicle cost	Comments	Criteria for awarding grants (see page 2 for details)						
				(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)
5. Havant CCS	£40,638	74%	A replacement vehicle to provide accessible transport for community groups in the Havant area to access local facilities, clubs, libraries, leisure activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
6. Test Valley Community Services	£18,665	75%	A replacement vehicle for our 7 year old Renault Kangoo wheelchair-accessible car in the Romsey area to enable purchase of vehicle for larger (particularly powered) wheelchairs to support community transport service provision.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
7. Test Valley Community Services	£50,000	91%	A new vehicle to support the expansion of community transport services including Dial A Ride services to include Andover through the provision of a purpose built vehicle.	✓	✓	✓	✓			

TOTAL: £196,455

Criteria Key

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

Grants not being recommended

Organisation	Cost of vehicle	% funding of total vehicle cost	Comments	Reason for rejection
8. Winchester Area Community Action	£49,728	100%	A replacement vehicle to support the Winchester Dial a Ride Service.	This grant award programme does not support Dial a Ride vehicle replacements. It is specifically aimed at wider community transport services.
9. Yelabus Association	£40,000	75% (approx)	A replacement vehicle to support community transport provision to Yateley and surrounding area, through Hart Call & Go and other organisation group hire trips.	The longer term funding strategy for this voluntary organisation is currently being developed with the support of officers.