

**Derbyshire County Council
Improvement and Scrutiny Committee
Communities, Culture and the Environment
Committee**

**Review of Community Transport
in Derbyshire**

November 2009

**Report of the Chairman of the Communities,
Culture and the Environment Scrutiny
Committee**

1. Background

The Sustainable and Safe Improvement and Scrutiny Committee (now the Communities, Culture and the Environment Committee) agreed to undertake a review of the Community Transport service in Derbyshire at the Committee meeting in March 2008. A working group of nominated Members from the Committee was formed and held its first meeting in June 2008.

The remit of the review was set out in the scoping report which states:

“The review will consider the effectiveness of Community Transport services in the County and will explore the benefits to local communities. The issue of value for money to both DCC and service users will be investigated.”

The scoping report also outlined the aim to develop a better understanding of the operation of Community Transport services across the County and to identify any improvements that might be made to the service. One anticipated outcome of this review was a recommendation setting out how best practice within the Community Transport field can be shared across the County.

Current context

During the course of this review there has been a change in administration at Derbyshire County Council. As access to services in rural areas is a priority for the new administration it is anticipated that a wide-scale review of users' needs will be undertaken across a range of services provided and/or funded by this Council. This links into the personalisation agenda which gives our customers more choice and control over the services we provide. In view of this change it will not be beneficial for the Community Transport review to continue to develop a final report and set of recommendations as this service will be included in the wider, strategic considerations of a broad-range of service provision.

It is, however, noted that the working group and departmental officers have undertaken a great deal of work during the course of this review which highlights the need for a Community Transport service in Derbyshire and some areas for potential improvement. It is therefore recommended that:

1. A further review of Community Transport be undertaken in approximately two years time building on the information gathered in this review and within the context of a wider review of users needs.

Key recommendations

During the course of the review the working group noted some key areas for recommendations which are still applicable in light of recent changes. In particular the need for a Community Transport service was strongly supported by the work and research undertaken by the working group although it was noted that currently it is difficult to evidence value for money as we do not have any particular requirements related to the funding we provide to the CT schemes. This makes it difficult to show outcome-based results related directly to DCC funding. The following recommendations are intended to address this issue:

2. In respect of the core DCC funding allocated to the Community Transport schemes it is recommended that clearly defined expected outcomes are identified and agreed with schemes and incorporated within a Service Level Agreement

3. Community Transport schemes should report progress on a regular basis against a defined set of criteria to aid performance management and evidence accountability and value for money.

The working group was interested to note the variations in funding to the individual schemes across the County and in particular the difference in funding allocation for vehicles. Whilst six of the schemes receive funding for four vehicles, Amber Valley has funding for five, Ashbourne only receives funding for two vehicles. It was noted that the development of the schemes over time had led to variances in a number of areas and it was agreed that the rationale behind the funding of vehicles should be considered in order to promote a more equitable approach.

4. It is recommended that the rationale behind funding allocations to each of the Community Transport schemes is revisited to eliminate any inequality in funding provision.

The working group held a number of discussions with the eight schemes and commissioners of transport services (including our own in-house contracts) to examine the tendering process and gain a greater understanding of the potential opportunities for CT schemes. It was noted that there will be numerous opportunities over the coming years for Community Transport schemes to tender for additional work which would help schemes to broaden their funding streams and become more sustainable in the future. Many of these opportunities will need to be

examined in the proposed review in two years time but it is timely for one particular initiative to be highlighted in this report.

Derbyshire County PCT is currently reviewing its non-emergency transport commissioning, which at present is largely carried out by East Midlands Ambulance Service. The working group met with the Assistant Director of Commissioning and other members of the commissioning team at the PCT to build a greater understanding of the work involved in the review. It was noted that the PCT will be conducting the review in the immediate future and will be commissioning a large range of non-emergency transport work from 2010. As a County-wide organisation the PCT highlighted some difficulties in dealing with eight different CT schemes and the work group noted that this may be an opportunity for the schemes to work together. However it is important that the PCT remains flexible enough to respond to the autonomy of local schemes in the same way that DCC adopts a locally flexible approach. The initiative has recently been taken forward at Director level and it is proposed joint funding between DCC and the PCT will provide revenue to subsidise non-emergency patient transport across the County delivered by the eight CT Schemes individually.

5. It is recommended that DCC continues to work closely with the PCT to optimise opportunities for joint working/shared approaches throughout the PCT commissioning review.

During discussions with the Community Transport schemes and Derbyshire County Councils' Senior Transport Officers it was noted that currently there are two different tendering criteria in use at DCC. These are used for procuring a range of different transport services including local bus services, school transport, social care and special needs transport. One approach scores points at 80:20 in respect of cost:quality, whilst the other approach adopts a split of 60:40 respectively. Schemes find this confusing and have raised concerns about the quality of some of the successful contractors who had won contracts because of the prices quoted in the tendering process. The working group agreed that it was unnecessary for a Local Authority to adopt two different scoring criteria, a view shared by the Senior Transport Officers who were aware of this issue and had begun to undertake work to agree one set of criteria. It was agreed by the working group that a single set of scoring criteria should apply and that it should give due weight to considerations other than cost. It should include guidance on methodology to ensure consistent and effective application. In reviewing these criteria it will be necessary to take account of the needs of users of all tendered services and the available budget.

6 It is recommended that Derbyshire County Council adopt one set of scoring criteria for use in the transport tendering process and give due weight to both budget and quality considerations.

Summary

This review has highlighted the value placed on the Community Transport service by especially vulnerable and rural communities. In light of the recent change in administration and the proposed strategic review of the personalisation of services, it is appropriate to postpone this review until 2011/12. It is also appropriate, however, to implement the recommendations set out in this report in the interim period as these relate to current opportunities and improvements which can be met without affecting the proposed future review.

ACTION PLAN

Recommendation	Action taken	Lead Officer	Timescale to report back to I&S Committee
A further review of Community Transport be undertaken in approximately two years time building on the information gathered in this review and within the context of a wider review of users needs.		DMW/JW Scrutiny Team	Scoping report September 2011 (subject to progress on the wide-scale review of users needs)
In respect of the core DCC funding allocated to the Community Transport schemes it is recommended that clearly defined expected outcomes are identified and agreed with schemes and incorporated within a Service Level Agreement		Steve Cannon, Integrated Transport Group	Draft proposals March 2010 Final proposals September 2010
Community Transport schemes should report progress on a regular basis against a defined set of criteria to aid performance		Elaine Wachlarz, Integrated Transport Group in co-operation with CT schemes	Ongoing following agreement of objectives/outcomes

management and evidence accountability and value for money.			
It is recommended that the rationale behind funding allocations to each of the Community Transport schemes is revisited to eliminate any inequality in funding provision.		Elaine Wachlarz, Integrated Transport Group	March 2010
It is recommended that DCC continues to work closely with the PCT to optimise opportunities for joint working/shared approaches throughout the PCT commissioning review.		Elaine Wachlarz, Integrated Transport Group	Ongoing
It is recommended that Derbyshire County Council adopt one set of scoring criteria for use in the transport tendering process and give due weight to both budget and quality considerations.		Dave Wood, Integrated Transport Group	March 2010