

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY
AND TRANSPORT**

10 September 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR TRANSPORT -
SURVEY OF NEEDS**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval to (1) undertake an assessment of people's needs for community and voluntary transport, and to identify gaps in existing provision, and (2) to postpone a decision on projects to be funded through round 2 of the Rural Sustainable Transport Fund.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

A wide range of demand responsive transport services are provided by community and voluntary transport organisations. These services play an important role in meeting essential transport needs for people where other transport options are not available, or for people who are unable to use available transport because of age or disability.

The services also make an important contribution to supporting employment in Derbyshire. They provide jobs for drivers and passenger assistants, as well as training and volunteering opportunities for people who may be seeking work. They also help remove transport as a barrier for those seeking work or training.

There are seven community transport schemes and six volunteer centres who provide transport services across the County. They provide high quality, door to door service, which is highly regarded by users. In addition, Rural Action Derbyshire provides support for people where transport is a barrier to work through the Wheels to Work scheme.

The County Council has provided funding to help support the provision of services including:

- Dial a Bus (transport to town centres and supermarkets).

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- Dial a Ride (accessible door to door transport for individuals, including access to healthcare).
- Volunteer Car schemes provided by Community Transport organisations (individual transport, including access to healthcare).
- Group travel.
- Wheels to Work (moped loan, bicycles, help with other transport costs).

Although user satisfaction surveys are undertaken for individual community and voluntary transport services, a county-wide assessment has never been undertaken to establish if essential transport needs are being met effectively for people who are eligible to use community or voluntary transport.

It is therefore recommended that work is undertaken to provide a better understanding of the use of these services, the contribution they make, and to identify gaps in provision. This work may include:

- a survey of existing users and non-users, and organisations representing groups of users e.g. Age UK Derbyshire, Derbyshire Association for the Blind, etc;
- user forums / discussions at existing forums such as 50+; and
- desktop analysis of census information relating to likely user groups (e.g. no car households and households where a persons' day to day activities are severely limited due to disability).

If approved, it is envisaged that the survey will begin in the Autumn with the aim of completing the analysis in early 2014. The information gathered will be used to help inform decisions about the development of the sector and its role in providing an efficient and responsive service.

Community and Voluntary Projects (Round 2)

At the Cabinet Member Meeting – Highways and Transport on 16 October 2012, the Cabinet Member approved the allocation of funding for a number of community and voluntary transport schemes, to be funded with money received from the Department for Transport (DfT) Rural Sustainable Transport Fund (Minute No.219/12 refers). At the same meeting, the Cabinet Member approved a second round of funding. Expressions of Interest for the second round were duly invited, with a closing date the end of March 2013. Notification of the outcome of the bidding process was anticipated to be the end of June 2013.

In order to ensure that successful projects are complementary to the findings of the needs assessment, it is proposed to put the second round process on hold until the work on identifying any gaps in provision is completed.

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(3) **Financial Considerations** The cost of undertaking the needs assessment will be met from the Rural Sustainable Transport Funding received from the DfT and is expected to be in the region of £5,000.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The criteria of the DfT Rural Sustainable Transport Funding are that local authorities should use the funding to support initiatives which develop Community Transport services, and not to replace existing local authority funding.

(5) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** Community and Voluntary Transport services are available to anyone who is unable to use public transport or who does not have access to public transport. The organisations are particularly valuable in providing access to essential services for people with mobility difficulties and many of the vehicles are accessible by wheelchair users.

(6) **Environmental and Health Considerations** Community and Voluntary Transport organisations provide an alternative means of accessing essential services for people who do not have the use of a car or who cannot use public transport. The aCTive travel (provided by Dial a Ride or Volunteer Car schemes) project is a scheme specifically designed to improve access to a wide range of healthcare facilities including GP's surgeries, hospital appointments, exercise classes and other health-related activities.

(7) **Transport Considerations** The County Council funds various transport options to ensure that people's transport needs are met. Identifying gaps in provision will help ensure that residents are not isolated due to a lack of transport.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, human resources and property considerations.

(8) **Key Decision** No.

(9) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(10) **Background Papers** Report to the Cabinet Member – Highways and Transport dated 16 October 2012. Officer contact details – Rebecca Pennyfather, extension 36721.

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(11) OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS That the Cabinet Member:

- 11.1 Approves work to be undertaken to make an assessment of peoples' needs for Community and Voluntary transport and to identify gaps in provision of services.
- 11.2 Approves the use of the Department for Transport Rural Sustainable Transport Funding for the needs assessment and other evidence collection as outlined in the report.
- 11.3 Agrees to defer consideration of expressions of interest for Round 2 Rural Sustainable Transport Funding.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services