

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

18 June 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE – PROPOSED GRANT
FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VOLUNTEER CAR
SCHEME IN THE CLOWNE AND BOLSOVER AREA**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval for grant funding to Clowne and District Community Transport to facilitate the introduction of a Community Car Scheme in the northern part of Bolsover District.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The 'aCTive travel' project is a countywide initiative, jointly funded by the County Council and the health sector, to improve access to healthcare and related facilities. The scheme was introduced in 2010/11 initially for a period of five years with the aim of helping older and vulnerable people to maintain their independence and improve their quality of life.

The service is used to improve access to health appointments and related destinations, such as care facilities, dentists and opticians. Each of the eight Community Transport organisations receives an aCTive travel grant of £20,000 per year to deliver these services (including Chesterfield and Amber Valley which have now merged into a single organisation).

'aCTive travel' is currently delivered by the Community Transport organisations across Derbyshire through either Dial-a-Ride or Volunteer Car schemes. Dial-a-Ride services use wheelchair accessible vehicles and paid drivers whilst Volunteer Car schemes use volunteer drivers who drive their own cars. The latter receive a payment from the passengers towards the cost of running their cars and it is a cost effective means of providing the 'aCTive travel' service. The Volunteer Car schemes offer the additional benefit to clients of a driver who will wait for them, or offer support, if they are attending an appointment.

Volunteer Car schemes now operate throughout Derbyshire except for the northern half of Bolsover District, where currently there is no Volunteer Car scheme.

Clowne and District Community Transport currently deliver the 'aCTive travel' service in Bolsover District through a Dial-a-Ride service. They report a doubling in demand since April 2012 and currently provide an average of 336 passenger journeys per month. It is estimated that 70% of these journeys could be provided through a Volunteer Car scheme, thereby reducing pressure on Community Transport vehicles and releasing resources for passengers who need a fully accessible vehicle. They have the necessary experience and are well placed to oversee the development of a car scheme.

In order to establish a car scheme in this area, the Community Transport scheme would need to undertake some initial preparatory work, develop promotional materials and activities and support for any volunteers who come forward. It is estimated that the cost of paying an employees to work additional hours for a temporary period would be £7,570. Once established, the ongoing costs could be met by the annual 'aCTive travel' grant with support for volunteers being provided by a Volunteer Co-ordinator (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport report dated 16 October 2012, Minute No 219/12 refers).

It is therefore recommended that a grant of £7,570 should be approved for Clowne and District Community Transport to introduce a Volunteer Car scheme in the northern part of Bolsover District. Progress on the introduction of the Volunteer Car scheme will be monitored and further reports will be submitted for the Member's consideration as appropriate.

(3) Financial Considerations The total amount required to support this initiative is £7,570 that can be met from the Department for Transport Rural Sustainable Transport Funding that has been made available to the County Council. After March 2014, the Volunteer Car Scheme will be funded through the annual 'aCTive travel' grant.

(4) Legal Considerations Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 confers a general power of competence on local authorities to do anything that individuals generally may do, including the provision of financial and assistance to any person or organisation. The proposed funding contribution to the Scheme Project is in accordance with the general power of competence.

The grant will be subject to conditions to ensure it is used solely for the purpose for which it is given.

(5) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** The project is intended to provide support to people who might otherwise have difficulty accessing medical appointments and related activities. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications that may help those of them who may be seeking employment.

(6) **Health and Transport Considerations** The Volunteer Car Scheme will provide an opportunity for older and vulnerable people to get to health related appointments and improve their well-being and independence. It is particularly important in helping people who do not have access to, or have difficulty using, public transport. Helping people to volunteer has wider social, economic and health benefits.

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

(7) **Key Decision** No.

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

(9) **Background Papers** Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport dated 16 October 2012 (Minute No 219/12 refers). Officer contact details – Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves a grant of £7,570 to Clowne and District Community Transport to introduce a Volunteer Car Scheme in the northern part of Bolsover District, as outlined in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services