

## DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – STRATEGIC POLICY AND  
BUDGET

28 May 2014

Joint Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment,  
the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults, and the Acting  
Strategic Director of Adult Care

REVIEW OF COUNTY COUNCIL PASSENGER TRANSPORT  
PROVISION

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval of the Cabinet Member for a review of the provision of passenger transport services by the County Council across all service users to identify efficiencies and cost savings.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

**Background**

Government imposed reductions in local authority funding mean that the County Council has to make savings of £157 million to its budgets over the next five years.

The County Council provides a number of different passenger transport services across the departments for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE), Children and Younger Adults (CAYA) and Adult Care. In 2013/14, the cost of these services amounted to around £33.9 million. The services offer transport to a variety of different users and broadly comprise:

Service	Requirement	2013/14 Cost (£000s)
Local bus services	Discretionary	4,120
Gold Card concessionary fares	Statutory	10,691
b_line concessionary fares	Discretionary	585
Community Transport grants	Discretionary	1,491
Wheels to Work contribution	Discretionary	100
Adult Care Transport	Mostly statutory	3,004
School Transport	Mostly statutory	5,331
Denominational Transport to faith schools	Discretionary	961
Special Educational Needs Transport	Mostly statutory	7,587
<b>Total</b>		<b>33,870</b>

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### **Progress to Date**

There have already been many initiatives to improve efficiency and reduce spending on the Authority's passenger transport operations. As an example, in previous years, cuts of some £3.12 million were made by reductions in local bus services, savings on concessionary fares and withdrawing financial support for 'non-entitled' home to school transport routes.

Following stakeholder consultation on proposals to charge for non-statutory home to school transport for certain children and young adults with special educational needs, it was agreed by Cabinet on 6 May 2014 to implement charges for post-16 special educational needs students with effect from September 2014.

Consultation has also been completed on the provision of denominational school transport. On 25 March 2014, Cabinet agreed to changes in the policy for providing transport to faith schools, including the withdrawal of discretionary transport for children who do not qualify for free transport and protection for existing pupils in key school years.

Adult Care has saved some £600,000 since 2011/12 in service reviews and re-tendering efficiencies. Adult Care has recently completed stakeholder consultation about the introduction of a transport policy and charging for the discretionary elements of adult care transport.

The proposed changes to these transport policies are subject to the conclusions of the consultation process, are intended to bring clarity to eligibility for assistance with transport needs, and ensure equitable provision of services, alongside the potential for savings.

A survey was undertaken by the County Council at the end of 2013 to assess peoples' needs for community and voluntary transport, and to provide a better understanding of the use of these services, the contribution they make to helping people get to the services they need, and to identify gaps in provision. Analysis of the results is currently being undertaken which will help inform future decisions relating to community transport services in Derbyshire.

In addition, the work of the Smarter Travel Board has been delivering more co-ordinated use of the Council's fleet vehicles, vehicle hire, passenger and goods transport, and employees' vehicles. It is envisaged that this programme will be taken forward under the overall umbrella of the Smarter Travel initiative.

### **Integrated Approach**

The County Council has, for a number of years, operated an integrated transport unit which manages all of its passenger transport provision within one section in the ETE Department. Advantages with such an approach

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include the inter-weaving of appropriate home to school services into the local bus network, which has already realised significant savings to both ETE and CAYA budgets. Improvements in procurement processes should also help to manage costs better and help to drive up quality standards.

However, it is considered that there are further savings to be found by considering further efficiencies across service areas. These could build upon proposals on eligibility outlined above, but also include greater integration of routes for different passenger needs or improved procurement processes.

It is therefore proposed to conduct a review of the delivery of all passenger transport services across the County Council. It may also be appropriate to consider some elements of health transport as well, although the extent and practicality of this will need to be investigated. The review will consider user needs alongside best practice elsewhere in the country, with the expectation of proposing changes that will need to be consulted upon before any final conclusions can be made.

In order to reflect the cross-departmental nature of the review, a working party with representatives from all relevant areas will be established to identify and action the agreed efficiency initiatives. The working group will be led by the Strategic Director – ETE, who will report to Councillor Andy Botham, Deputy Cabinet Member – Jobs, Economy and Transport and Councillor Jim Coyle, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

It is intended to carry out the review to a timetable that would allow any changes to be ready for implementation in the 2015/16 financial year. To meet this timetable, it is proposed to appoint specialist consultants with appropriate experience or technical skills to assist with aspects of the review, and to support County Council staff with progressing the review.

The detailed scope of any consultancy support will be determined by the officer working group and Strategic Director ETE. At this stage, it is envisaged that external support would assist in areas such as reviewing good practice so that the County Council can benefit from the experience of other local authorities and in providing technical support, for example to assist with the analysis of any mapping of passenger transport services. The review will ensure good value for money by making the best possible use of existing skills and capacity within the County Council. External support will only be used where needs cannot be met from existing resources. Any consultants would be appointed in accordance with the County Council's financial regulations and, if appropriate, further reports will be submitted for Member's approval.

Relevant staff and the consultants will report to the cross-departmental working group under the Strategic Director – ETE. It is expected that the total cost could be up to £50,000 to meet the costs of technical support, consultancy and temporary staff resources where appropriate. As this is an

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invest-to-save proposal, it is recommended that the funds are sourced from the County Council's Challenge Fund.

An initial report is expected to take up to six months to complete, with findings being reported to Cabinet later in the year. While the work may involve user groups or representatives to inform any recommendations to Cabinet, it is expected that there will be the need for public consultation on any possible changes before final decisions can be made.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Passenger transport costs to the Authority were approximately £33.9 million in 2013/14. There have already been significant reductions made to date and the work outlined in this report will identify the scope for further potential savings.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** Staff resources will be required to both inform and support the work of consultants and as project officers to lead on implementation and service re-design.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

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

(7) **Background Papers** None. Officer contact details – Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

8.1 Approves the cross-departmental review of passenger transport services under the leadership of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment with support, as necessary, from specialist consultants.

8.2 Approves up to £50,000 from the Challenge Fund to support the delivery of the project.

8.3 Authorises the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment to appoint specialist consultants to provide technical support and temporary staff up to a maximum cost of £50,000 as outlined in the report.

**Mike Ashworth**

**Ian Thomas**

**Mary McElvaney**

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**Strategic Director -  
Economy Transport and  
Environment**

**Strategic Director  
for Children and  
Younger Adults**

**Acting Strategic Director  
for Adult Care**