

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEETING**

**18 June 2013**

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**GRANT FUNDING FOR THE WHEELS TO WORK SCHEME  
(JOBS, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT)**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To inform Cabinet about new revenue funding for Derbyshire's Wheels to Work (W2W) scheme being made available by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund and to agree, in principle, capital funding from the County Council for a period of up to five years.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The W2W scheme, currently administered by Rural Action Derbyshire, helps people who find it difficult to get to work or training including, for example, young people living in rural areas or shift workers who do not have the use of a car or do not have convenient access to public transport.

The Derbyshire scheme was established in 2004. It was initially funded by the Countryside Agency and focussed on moped loan for people in rural communities. Since then, the scheme has expanded to include offering transport advices, bicycles and electric bicycles, and to help with the cost of public transport fares. More than 2,000 people have been helped since the scheme started. Recent discussions have concluded that local Job Centres are able to help with the provision of bicycles and the cost of public transport, allowing the W2W scheme to concentrate more on moped loan in future.

Clients pay £20 a week for the use of a moped and they can keep the vehicle for a period of up to six months. The emphasis is on helping people to get established in a job or on a training course and they are encouraged to make their own arrangements for transport in the longer term. To this end, the scheme works with local credit unions to arrange loans for clients to buy their moped at the end of the loan period if they wish to do so. This helps the client to save and to access a loan at a low interest rate and from a reputable source.

The scheme puts emphasis on safety and security, and anyone taking up the offer of a moped loan will be required to take Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) and be offered protective clothing, including a helmet, and a heavy duty lock for the moped. In addition, the County Council provides funding for further safety training ('CBT Plus') and, taken together, these measures have helped the project to maintain a good safety record.

The County Council has supported the scheme with both revenue and capital funding. In 2012/13, the Council is providing a revenue grant of £50,000 (Minute No. 66/13 refers) and a capital grant of £50,000 for the purchase of mopeds and associated equipment (Minute No. 84/13 refers).

On 21 May 2013, it was announced that W2W's bid to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund had been successful. This will provide revenue funding for Rural Action Derbyshire totalling £477,890 over five years. The funding can be used to support a range of activities including moped running costs, administration and management costs, moped and staff training, travel costs and a contribution to overheads. The primary focus of the Big Lottery funding is on rural isolation but the revenue funding from the County Council should help to ensure that a service can be offered throughout Derbyshire. It is estimated that the Lottery funding, together with funding from the County Council and other organisations, will enable at least 500 people to be helped over the next five years. The project has a good record of exceeding its targets and achieving effective outcomes. For example, monitoring has shown that 93% of people who are loaned a moped are still in work six months later.

At this stage, it is difficult to estimate the future requirement for revenue funding from the County Council and this will need to be reviewed on an annual basis in light of the availability of funding from other sources and any changes in the level of need for the project's services.

There will be, however, an on-going need for capital funding to help with the purchase of mopeds as this is not covered by the Big Lottery funding. For some years, the County Council has provided support as part of its Local Transport Capital Programme. So far, this has been agreed on an annual basis as a part of the annual update of the Capital Programme.

The successful bid to the Big Lottery fund provides more certainty for the project, in terms of revenue funding, and will help staff to focus on the project's core activities. In the circumstances, it is recommended that Cabinet should consider providing a similar level of certainty about capital funding. In particular, it is recommended that a commitment should be made in principle to provide capital funding for the project for the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18. It is suggested that initially, this should be at the current level of £50,000 a year, subject to an annual review as part of the approval process for the annual Capital Programme. This should provide an adequate level of

security for the project enabling it to plan ahead more effectively while safeguarding the County Council's interests. If funding is continued at its current level for the next five years, it is thought that an additional 200 people could be helped to get access to work or training.

Senior officers from the County Council monitor the project to ensure the effective use of resources and that the level of output consistent with the available funding. More generally, this is part of a range of initiatives that is being developed to help overcome transport barriers to employment. For example, the associated 'Ways to Work' project in Bolsover District provides a flexible range of services including, for example, help with bus and train fares. Officers are continuing to work with bus operators and Job Centre Plus to explore further opportunities that may be available.

**(3) Financial Considerations** The proposed contribution to the W2W project can be met from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme. It is proposed that initially, this should be £50,000 a year, but this will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the approval process for the annual Capital Programme.

**(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 capital funding contribution to the W2W Project is in accordance with the general power of competence.

**(5) Equality and Diversity, Health and Transport Considerations** The project is intended to provide support to people who might otherwise have difficulty accessing suitable work or training. A diverse range of clients are helped by the scheme, including in particular young people who do not have access to or cannot afford to run a car, people living in isolated communities that are not well served by conventional bus services and shift workers who need to travel to and from work at times when public transport is not available. In many instances the scheme helps people into their first job or people who are returning to work after a period of unemployment.

The W2W project provides an opportunity for people to get access to work and training who may otherwise be unable to do so. Helping people to get to work or training has wider social, economic and health benefits, and the level of spending suggested in this report can be seen as an effective use of available resources.

An evaluation of the W2W Project in Bolsover over the period 2009 to 2012, undertaken by ERS Consultants, concluded that 'there was a universal

acknowledgement that the project is doing excellent work and these views are supported by the hard evidence of outputs and outcomes. These show excellent value for money for the project's funders, considerable savings to the public purse, environmental gains and substantial benefits to individuals.' The consultants further concluded that every £1 invested by funders generated a return of £24.50 to the Exchequer (for example, as a result of the reduction in the number of benefit claims).

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, human resources, environmental, property and 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** Reports to Cabinet 'Proposed Grant Funding for Community Transport for 2013/14 (Highways and Transport)' dated 5 March 2013 and 'Departmental Service Plans 2010-14 2013-14 Refresh' dated 26 March 2013. Evaluation of Ways to Work Bolsover 2009-2012, Final Reports, ERS Consultants. Officer contact details – Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 10.1 Notes the work being undertaken by the Wheels to Work project in helping Derbyshire residents get access to work and training.
- 10.2 Welcomes the recent award of funding by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund totalling £477,890 over five years.
- 10.3 Approves, in principle, capital funding for the project for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18 initially at a level of £50,000 a year, subject to review as part of the process of agreeing the annual Capital Programme.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services**