

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

25 March 2014

Report of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment

**PROPOSED GRANT FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT
AND CONTRIBUTION TO WHEELS TO WORK FOR 2014/15
(JOBS, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT)**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To approve the provision of revenue grant funding for Community Transport organisations and a contribution towards the Wheels to Work/Ways to Work project for 2014/15.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

Community Transport plays a vital role in meeting Derbyshire's transport needs and has received financial support from the County Council for over 25 years. The eight schemes (two of which have now merged) currently receive grant funding of £186,347 per scheme, a total of some £1.491m, to provide a range of services for people unable to use, or who do not have access to, public transport. Services include Dial-a-Bus, Group Travel and aCTive travel (access to healthcare and other appointments). The schemes use a mix of both volunteer and paid drivers, but all are trained to a high standard to meet the varying needs of their passengers.

Approval was given at the meeting of the Cabinet Member - Jobs, Economy and Transport on 10 September 2013 for work to be undertaken to make an assessment of people's needs for community and voluntary transport, and to provide a better understanding of the use of these services, the contribution they make and to identify gaps in provision. The survey has now been completed and an analysis of the results is currently being undertaken which will help to inform future proposals relating to community transport services in Derbyshire.

The focus of this report is on grant funding for 2014/15. In light of future budget pressures, it is likely that the County Council will need to review its funding for Community Transport in 2015/16 and beyond. Any proposed change would be subject to public consultation but it is expected that the

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emphasis would be on providing a more effective service and ensuring better value for money.

Funding Provision for 2014/15

It is proposed that annual payments for 2014/15 to the Community Transport schemes should be unchanged from the current level of spending despite the severe budget pressures facing the Authority. This allows the schemes certainty of funding for 2014/15, while acknowledging that the survey outlined above will be used to ensure that the service offers best value for money in the future.

The proposed payments for 2014/15 for each of the eight schemes are shown in the table below. It should be noted that Amber Valley and Chesterfield Community Transport have merged into a single scheme known as CT4TC. Payments to CT4TC are therefore double the amounts shown in the table. The payments also assume that the annual contribution of £80,000 from the health sector will continue to be available to support the aCtive travel project. All payments to the Community Transport schemes are subject to a Grant Funding Agreement setting out the expectations of both parties.

	Proposed Funding in 2014/15 (per scheme)
Grant payment of £151,347 for the operation of Dial-a-Bus services (from home to town, shops or other services) and £20,000 per scheme for aCtive travel that provides access to healthcare (a project jointly funded by Derbyshire County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment and Public Health, and the Clinical Commissioning Groups)	£171,347
Payment for participation in flat fare Dial-a-Bus scheme	£15,000
Total Payment per scheme	£186,347

On this basis, the total cost of grant payments to the Community Transport schemes in 2014/15 will be £1,490,776.

In addition to the well-established Community Transport schemes, there are other transport providers who help to plug the gap where neither conventional public transport nor community transport offers an appropriate solution. One of these is the Wheels to Work project that helps people (including apprentices) who find it difficult to get to work, education or training (e.g. young people living in rural areas or shift workers who do not have access to a car or do not

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have convenient access to public transport). The support offered includes moped loan, provision of a bicycle or help with fares. The underlying aim is to help people get started in a job, and those benefitting from the scheme are encouraged to take responsibility for their own travel arrangements in the longer term.

The Wheels to Work project is an important means of ensuring that young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) are not prevented from taking up employment and training opportunities due to a lack of transport.

In 2013/14, the County Council made available £50,000 revenue funding to support the scheme, together with £50,000 from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme. Funding is also available from a grant awarded by the Big Lottery, and in Derby City through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

It is recommended that £50,000 revenue funding should again be made available in 2014/15. This will be in addition to capital funding expected to be made available from the Local Transport Plan Capital Programme. This will ensure that help can continue to be provided to people in all parts of Derbyshire.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The proposed funding allocations of £1,490,776 to the Community Transport schemes and a contribution of £50,000 to the Wheels to Work project can be met from the 2014/15 Transport Services budget for Community Transport.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The provision of grants to Community Transport organisations is encompassed by the Council's general power of competence contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 also enables the Council to incur expenditure in making contributions to the funds of any body which provides any public service, either to the public at large or to any section of the public, in the United Kingdom otherwise than for gain.

The receiving organisation must provide the local authority with a written statement, usually in the form of an annual report and accounts, of the use to which the assistance has been put. It will be a requirement that each scheme provides regular reports throughout the year on the use of the funding in addition to the annual report and accounts.

The conditions which the County Council attaches to the grant funding for community transport organisations provide that the grant funding is to be used for the purpose specified. This is to ensure that the grant funding does not contravene state aid rules.

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(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 schemes are particularly valuable in providing access to essential services for people with mobility difficulties and many of the vehicles are accessible by wheelchair users. In further developing Community and Voluntary Transport services, an important aim is to encourage use of the services by a broader cross-section of the community.

(6) **Environment, Health and Transport 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.

The Wheels to Work project is a moped loan and cycle scheme that aims to help people get to work, education or training. It is used particularly by people following a period of unemployment or by people getting to their first job. It is especially valuable for people living in rural areas where public transport may be limited or people who have to start or finish work at times when public transport is not available.

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

(7) **Key Decision** Yes.

(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 Cabinet dated 5 March 2013 (Minute No. 66/13 refers). Officer contact details – Rebecca Pennyfather, extension 36721.

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

10.1 Approves the proposed allocation of £186,347 revenue grant to each of the Community Transport schemes and a revenue contribution of £50,000 to the Wheels to Work project, for 2014/15 as outlined in this report.

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- 10.2 Notes that a further report on proposals for the future of Council funding for community transport services in Derbyshire will be submitted when the analysis of the recent survey has been completed.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment