

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

5 March 2013

Report of the Strategic Director – Environmental Services

**PROPOSED GRANT FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT
FOR 2013/14 (HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT)**

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

(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 including Dial-a-Bus, Group Travel and aCTive travel (access to healthcare). All are pre-bookable, door-to-door services operating on flexible routes. 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.

Funding Provision for 2013/14

It is proposed that annual payments to the eight Community Transport schemes should be unchanged from the current level of spending. The proposed payments for 2013/14 to 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. All payments to the Community Transport schemes are subject to a Grant Funding Agreement setting out the expectations of both parties.

	Proposed Funding in 2013/14 (per scheme)
Grant payment of £151,347 for the operation of Dial-a-Bus services (home to town, home to shops) and £20,000 per scheme for aCTive travel that provides access to healthcare (a project that has been jointly funded by Derbyshire County Council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT))	£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 2013/14 will be £1,490,776. This assumes that the annual contribution of £80,000 from the health sector will continue to be available in 2013/14. This financial provision will be incorporated in the Service Plan for Environmental Services which is to be considered at a future Cabinet meeting.

In addition to the well-established Community Transport organisations, 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 Ways to Work/Wheels to Work project that helps people who find it difficult to get to work or training (e.g. 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 support offered includes moped loan, provision of a bicycle and help with bus fares. The underlying aim is to help people get started in a job and those benefiting from the scheme are encouraged to take responsibility for their own travel arrangements in the longer term.

The Ways to Work/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 lack of transport. The importance of its work has been recognised by the Government. The Secretary of State for Transport has recently met the project officer for the Derbyshire scheme and Richard Benyon MP, Under Secretary for Rural Affairs, is reported to have commented that he wanted Wheels to Work to be a 'mainstream solution for transport problems'.

In 2012/13 the County Council made available £25,000 revenue fundings to support the project, together with £45,000 from the Local Transport Plan capital programme. Funding was also available to the project from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust in some areas of Derbyshire, but all of this

funding has now been used. In the circumstances, it is recommended that £50,000 revenue funding should be made available in 2013/14. This will again be in addition to capital funding expected to be made available from the Local Transport Plan capital programme. This will ensure that help can be offered to people in all parts of Derbyshire.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The proposed funding allocations of £1,490,776 to the Community Transport schemes and £50,000 to the Wheels to Work/Ways to Work project can be met from the 2013/14 Transport Services budget for Community Transport. The £80,000 contribution to the aCTive travel project can be met from reserves set aside to cover the 5 year life of the project.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The provision of grants to Community Transport organisations is encompassed by the Council. The 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.

(5) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** Community 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 all of the vehicles are accessible by wheelchair users. In further developing Community Transport services, an important aim is to encourage use of the services by a broader cross-section of the community.

The Wheels to Work project is a moped loan and cycle scheme that aims to help people get to work 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.

(6) **Environmental, Health and Transport Considerations** Community Transport schemes 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 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) **Property Considerations** There are no property considerations associated with this report.

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

(8) **Key Decision** Yes.

(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 Cabinet dated 3 April 2012 (Minute No /12 refers). Officer contact details - Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(11) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That Cabinet approves the proposed allocation of grant to the Community Transport schemes and the Wheels to Work/Ways to Work project, as outlined in this report.

Ian Stephenson
Strategic Director – Environmental Services