

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	8 February 2012	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2358
TITLE:	Voluntary sector funding applications for community transport 2012/13	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Appendix 1 – Criteria for funding community transport schemes Appendix 2 – Funding applications for community transport 2012/13		

### 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Funding applications have been received from voluntary sector bodies for the provision of community transport services in 2012/13. This Report gives details of those applications with recommendations on the allocation of funding.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

- 2.1 Funding proposals in Appendix 2 be approved.
- 2.2 New two-year service level agreements be entered into with the three dial-a-ride schemes in the Council's area
- 2.3 The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport Development be given delegated powers to reallocate funds, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, from approved projects that become unviable owing to the level of funding allocated or to a change in circumstances of the applicant group, should such situations arise during the year.

### 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Service Level Agreements for the three dial-a-ride schemes end on 31 March 2012 and are currently under negotiation. A small inflation-related adjustment is proposed to the funding for Keynsham Dial-a-Ride and Midsomer Norton & Radstock Dial-a-Ride to enable the schemes to maintain their current level of

service. Total funding recommended for the three schemes in 2011/12 amounts to £188,470.

- 3.2 Eight other community transport providers applied for funding of £86,866 in total for 2012/13. The applications have been evaluated against the criteria in Appendix 1 and awards totalling that amount are recommended.
- 3.3 If the recommended awards are made, total spending on community transport support in 2012/13 will be £275,336, excluding the government grant described in paragraph 3.5. Provision has been made for this amount in the draft budget.
- 3.4 In addition to support for community transport services, the Council provides funding for CRB checks for paid staff and training for trustees in their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.5 In March 2011, the government provided a special grant to assist the development of community transport services in rural areas. The allocation to Bath & North East Somerset Council was £42,540. The government announced recently that a similar grant will be made in March 2012. As with last year's grant, local community transport schemes will be invited to submit proposals to the Council for a share of this funding to assist their development and it will be over and above the awards recommended in this Report.
- 3.6 The draft financial proposals outlined above are subject to the Approval of the Budget for 2012/2013 by the Full Council in February 2012.

## **4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 The proposals will ensure the continuation of community transport schemes provided by the voluntary sector and will meet the following Corporate Priorities:
  - Building communities where people feel safe and secure
  - Promoting the independence of older people
  - Improving life chances of disadvantaged teenagers and young people
  - Sustainable growth
  - Addressing the causes and effects of Climate Change
  - Improving transport and the public realm

## **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The Joint Local Transport Plan for the West of England Partnership Area 2011 – 2026 aims to maintain, diversify, expand and integrate community transport provision by:
  - Linking with other forms of public transport
  - Optimising community transport operations
  - Encouraging social enterprises
  - Helping with marketing, publicity and information

- 5.2 Community transport improves access to education, training, shopping, leisure and health facilities for people living in remote rural areas and those who are elderly or disabled.
- 5.3 Recommended awards have been arrived at following assessment of grant applications against the criteria in Appendix 1 and a comparison of value for money.
- 5.4 Eight schemes that received grants for 2011/12 have applied for funding again this year to continue the provision of affordable and accessible transport. Some schemes applied for higher grants to reflect increases in their operating costs. Details are given in Appendix 2.
- 5.5 Keynsham & District Dial-a-Ride operates a well-established service in the urban areas of Keynsham and Saltford as well as a rural service covering five parishes. The service runs under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that expires on 31 March 2012. It is proposed to negotiate a new two-year SLA.
- 5.6 5.7 Midsomer Norton and Radstock Ring & Ride operates a dial-a-ride service in the urban areas of Midsomer Norton and Radstock as well as a substantial rural service covering 34 parishes in the Chew Valley and the area south of Bath. The service runs under a Service Level Agreement that expires on 31 March 2012. It is proposed to negotiate a new two-year SLA.
- 5.7 In addition to the dial-a-ride services provided by voluntary groups, the Council's in-house transport fleet operates a dial-a-ride service in the Bath City area under the direction of the Corporate Transport Services Group. In 2011, the service expanded to cover Bathford and Batheaston on two days a week. No increase in support is needed in 2012/13 to maintain this service. It is proposed to negotiate a new two-year SLA.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 A proportionate equalities impact assessment has been carried out using corporate guidelines.
- 7.2 With regard to the Equality Duty now placed on public bodies, it is envisaged that the recommended decision will advance equality of opportunity for persons with the protected characteristics of age and disability by facilitating the provision of flexible fully-accessible transport. The majority of users of community transport services are elderly or disabled.
- 7.3 It is envisaged that the recommended decision will have a neutral impact in respect of the other aspects of the Equality Duty.

## 8 RATIONALE

- 8.1 The recommended awards will ensure the continuation of existing community transport services.
- 8.2 The Council's Public Transport Team considers all applications against set criteria (see Appendix 1) and assesses value for money by comparing the cost per trip of comparable schemes, based on the information that applicants provide.

## 9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None.

## 10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Section 151 Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. As in previous years, it was not deemed appropriate to consult more widely.
- 10.2 Consultation has been carried out electronically.

## 11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

- 11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People.

## 12 ADVICE SOUGHT

- 12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Strategic Director – Resources & Support Services) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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<b>Sponsoring Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Roger Symonds
<b>Background papers</b>	None
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	