

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKERS:	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council Cllr Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 9th March 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2516
TITLE:	Voluntary sector funding applications for community transport 2013/4		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 – Criteria for funding community transport schemes Appendix 2 – Funding applications for community transport 2013/4			

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Funding applications have been received from voluntary sector bodies for the provision of community transport services in 2013/4. This Report gives details of those applications with recommendations on the allocation of funding.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Members are asked to agree that:

2.1 Funding proposals in Appendix 2 be approved.

2.2 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 Keynsham Dial-a-Ride and Midsomer Norton & Radstock Dial-a-Ride allow for an inflation-related adjustment, based on transport industry costs, to enable the schemes to maintain their level of service. The adjustment from 1 April 2013 will be +2.6%, so the funding for the schemes in 2013/4 will be £74,256 and £100,647 respectively.
- 3.2 The Service Level Agreement for Bath Dial-a-Ride allows for a 1% increase in funding for 2013/4 to £18,180.
- 3.3 Eight other community transport providers applied for funding of £94,300 in total for 2013/4. The applications have been evaluated against the criteria in Appendix 1 and assessed for value for money. Awards totalling £87,684 are recommended.
- 3.4 If the recommended awards are made, total spending on community transport support in 2013/14 will be £280,767. Provision has been made for this amount in the budget.
- 3.5 All schemes have made endeavours to contain their costs and operate more efficiently. The average subsidy per single passenger journey across all the community transport providers has gone down from £3.49 in 2011/2 to £3.30 in the first half of 2012/3.
- 3.6 In March 2012, the government provided a special grant to assist the development of community transport services. The allocation to Bath & North East Somerset Council was £42,540. Community transport providers submitted proposals for a share of this funding and the Cabinet Member for Transport decided on the awards, which are detailed in Appendix 2. A residual amount of £14,040 was set aside pending development of a proposal by one of the schemes.
- 3.7 In addition to support for community transport services, the Council provides funding for safeguarding checks for paid staff and training for trustees in their roles and responsibilities.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The recommended actions will help to promote independence and positive lives for everyone by making accessible transport available for those who have difficulty in using mainstream public transport or who live in areas poorly served by public transport. Community transport helps people to access work, shops, education, medical and leisure facilities and is highly valued by its users.
- 4.2 The recommended actions will help to create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live by providing transport facilities that the commercial market is unable to offer, by helping communities meet their aspirations, by enabling more people to participate in community activities and by creating opportunities for people to help their communities through volunteering.

4.3 The recommended actions will help to build a stronger economy by helping people to access jobs, shops, education and leisure facilities and by helping voluntary sector transport providers to have a presence in the market.

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 work, education, training, shopping, leisure and health facilities for people living in 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 The three dial-a-ride schemes are operated under service level agreements (SLAs) that expire on 31 March 2014. They will be reviewed during the course of 2013.

5.5 Eight schemes that received grants for 2012/3 have applied for funding again this year to continue the provision of affordable and accessible transport. Five of those schemes have applied for the same funding or less than they received in 2012/3. Two schemes have applied for small increases in funding to reflect inflation. One scheme (Swan Advice Network) applied for a bigger increase to fund an expansion of the services it offers.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Cabinet Members 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 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The recommended awards will ensure the continuation of existing community transport services and will help the Council meet its objectives.

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 (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Andy Strong, Public Transport Team Leader - 01225 394201
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	