

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**

**Cabinet**

**Date of Committee**

**17 March 2011**

**Report Title**

**Review of Community Transport Schemes for Value for Money of Revenue Grant**

**Summary**

The Council meeting on 15 February 2011 considered the proposed Savings Plan including the proposal to cease providing community transport.

An amendment was agreed requesting officers to submit a report to Cabinet with details of the financial review of the community transport schemes currently receiving revenue grant from the County Council.

Officers have investigated the cost and performance data for the community transport schemes receiving revenue grant support. Data is provided for the two basic categories of service, volunteer car schemes and community transport minibus operations.

**For further information please contact**

Stephen Roots  
Community Transport Officer  
Tel. 01926 412673  
stephenroots@warwickshire.gov.uk

**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?**

Yes/No

**Background Papers**

None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**

*Details to be specified*

Other Committees

.....

Local Member(s)  
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

.....

Other Elected Members

Cllr Mrs H. Walton, Cllr J. Whitehouse and Councillor R. Sweet for information .....

- Cabinet Member  
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)  Cllr Cockburn.....
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  I Marriott
- Finance  L Firmstone
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals

**FINAL DECISION**                      **YES/NO**                      *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :**

*Details to be specified*

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Cabinet – 17 March 2011

### Review of Community Transport Schemes for Value for Money of Revenue Grant

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

##### Recommendation

That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, following consultation with key providers and user groups and the Lead Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economy, to continue grant support up to a total cost of £45,000 in 2011/12 for those schemes which he considers to offer best value for money.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Full Council meeting on 15 February 2011 considered the proposed Savings Plan including the proposal to cease providing community transport.
- 1.2 An amendment was issued requesting officers to submit a report to Cabinet with details of the financial review of the community transport schemes currently receiving revenue grant from the County Council.

## 2. Operational and Cost Factors

- 2.1 The schemes receiving grant in Warwickshire fall into two basic categories:-
  - (i) Volunteer car schemes, the majority of whose users are older persons needing transport to medical facilities, for example, out-patients' appointments at hospitals. Office staff book and schedule trip requests and volunteers enrolled with the schemes deliver the service using their own private cars and are able to reclaim motoring expenses incurred.
  - (ii) Schemes operating wheelchair accessible minibuses or MPVs (multi-purpose vehicles) under non-commercial permit arrangements whose users are predominantly elderly or disabled, or unable to access alternative suitable public or private transport due, for example, to geographical isolation. Many of the journeys are driven by volunteers but some operators employ paid drivers on contract work. Office staff take bookings, schedule trips and attend to general administration as well as scheduling servicing and maintenance of vehicles.

- 2.2 Some schemes may receive further support in the form of locally secured grant money they have been awarded from other bodies, for example, NHS Warwickshire, Lloyds TSB, Awards for All, private donations.
- 2.3 In all cases, a small proportion of a scheme's income derives from passenger fares or a small fixed booking charge per trip.

### **3. Cost and Performance Data**

- 3.1 One of the factors that was used to identify community transport as a potential saving was a high level of subsidy per trip compared to other transport services.
- 3.2 Table 1 below gives the name and description of the schemes; the type of scheme; the number of single passenger journeys provided in year 2009/10; the amount of County Council grant paid in 2009/10; the cumulative cost of the schemes in 2009/10 and the subsidy per passenger trip.

**Table 1**

Name of Service/Scheme	Brief Description of Service	Scheme Type	Trips 2009-10	Total Cost 2009-10 (£)	Cumulative Cost 2009-10 (£)	Subsidy per Single Passenger Trip (£)
ALCESTER & STUDLEY CAR SCHEME - Operator: VASA	Volunteer car scheme for health-related trips serving eligible residents of Stratford District. Our funding is a contribution to the administrative costs of running the service.	Volunteer car scheme	25,271	13,366.00	13,366.00	0.53
MEDICARE TRANSPORT SERVICE Operator: Volunteer Centre, Nuneaton and Bedworth	Volunteer car scheme for health-related trips serving eligible residents of Nuneaton and Bedworth. Our funding is a contribution to the administrative costs of running the service.	Volunteer car scheme	5,993	4,016.00	17,382.00	0.67
SHIPSTON LINK MINIBUS	A voluntary organisation running nine registered bus routes for residents of Shipston and the surrounding villages.	Community bus	7,806	7,362.00	24,744.00	0.94
RUGBY BROKERAGE, Operator WCAVA Volunteer Centre, Rugby	Our funding gives support to a minibus brokerage service for community groups in the Borough.	Minibus operator – group hire	4,480	5,000.00	29744.00	1.12
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE CAR SCHEME, Operator: Beeline Community Transport	Volunteer car scheme for health-related trips serving eligible residents of North Warwickshire. Our funding is a contribution to the administrative costs of running the service.	Volunteer car scheme	5,436	7,357.00	37,101.00	1.35
TRANSPORT TO EMPLOYMENT, Scheme name" Buster Werkenbak" operated by Merlin Venture Limited	Supports the Buster Werkenbak service which provides transport into major sites of employment in North Warwickshire for residents of the Borough who have no suitable means of transport.	Minibus operation charging individual fares	5,680	19,375.00	56,476.00	3.41
SUPPORTED SHOPPING SERVICE	Is set up primarily to serve wheelchair users and their carers in Nuneaton and Bedworth. Note: trip total is for the year Oct 2009 – Sep 2010.	Minibus/MPV operation charging individual fares	700	2,879.00	59,355.00	4.11
MINOR COMMUNITY CAR SCHEMES <£1,000	Support to very small, low-volume volunteer car schemes.	Volunteer car scheme	110	550.00	59,905.00	5.00
Back and 4 <sup>TH</sup> COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	Serves Stratford District Community groups, operates 5 x 16 seater, disabled access minibuses and one MPV. Reliant on core funding	Minibus operation – mostly group hire but providing some trips at individual fares	8,049	54,973.00	114,878.00	6.83
RUGBY RURAL LINK, Operator: WCAVC Volunteer Centre, Rugby	Funding gives support to the rural minibuses service that brings isolated people in for shopping and leisure trips to Rugby Town Centre.	Minibus operation charging individual fares	376	3,375.00	118,253.00	8.98
		<b>Totals:</b>	<b>118,253.00</b>	<b>118,253.00*</b>	<b>118,253.00</b>	

\* Excludes WCC management and administrative costs of scheme provision.

- 3.3 Table 1 highlights those five schemes which, using this methodology, represent a lower range of subsidy per trip (£0.53 to £1.35) than the range of subsidy within the remaining schemes (£3.41 to £8.98). The five schemes also carry significant numbers of passengers and provide a recognised enhancement to the current passenger transport network in Warwickshire.
- 3.4 The total value of the five schemes in 2009/10 was £37,101.00. In addition, the cost of continuing to manage and administer these schemes in the future would be approximately £8,000 per annum. The average level of subsidy to the five schemes providing the lowest passenger journey costs £0.76 per single passenger journey. This compares favourably with the average subsidy per passenger journey across the whole of Warwickshire's financially supported conventional bus network of £0.82 per single passenger journey (based on the total number of passengers travelling on WCC supported local bus services in 2009/10).
- 3.5 This analysis represents a provisional view as to those schemes offering best value for money. However, a consultation process should be undertaken as soon as possible to establish whether this analysis fairly and accurately identifies those schemes most deserving of continuous support. The intention will be to implement changes as from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Based on the indicative model of continuing to provide grants for the five schemes generating the lowest passenger journey costs, as well as the necessary management and administrative support required, it would be necessary for WCC to retain a budget for Community Transport of £45,000 per annum. It is proposed that this be a ceiling on the resources to be made available from the inflation contingency held within the Environment and Economy Directorate.

PAUL GALLAND  
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy  
Shire Hall  
Warwick

1 March 2011