

Date : 27th September 2011
Agenda item : No. 7
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**SUBMISSION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT MEMBER TASK GROUP**

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the progress of the Task Group which was established at the June meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 The first meeting of the Task Group took place on 18th August and was attended by four Members of the Committee and the Cabinet Member for Community as an observer. This was an introductory meeting to enable the Group to agree its purpose and develop an understanding of the community transport scheme.
- 2.2 Terms of reference were approved by the Group – attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 The Group received a presentation from officers regarding the scheme including its history, finance, operational performance and future prospects. The critical importance of volunteer drivers to the success of the scheme was noted.
- 2.4 Members were advised of the growth of the scheme over time with the number of journeys carried out (639 in 10/11), miles traveled (20,419) and passenger trips (7,964) gradually increasing. Discussion centred around the following points:
- Age of the vehicles and the need for replacements; rising maintenance costs
 - Access to other vehicles eg. from schools to supplement in house capacity (especially during the busy summer holiday period)
 - The potential to secure financial contributions from others towards the running costs of the scheme eg. parish councils; it was suggested that the Parish Forum may be a useful opportunity for securing more support from rural areas
 - Marketing of the service and the impact of a poster and leafleting campaign; the time required to market the service (and ensuring this is proportionate with any new income / business obtained as a result)
 - Potential to seek sponsorship eg. from local supermarkets
 - Profile of drivers (age range etc)
 - Availability of escorts
 - Relationship between the Task Group and the Community Transport Advisory Group
- 2.5 The Group approved a work programme – attached at **Appendix 2**.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members to comment on the work to date and note the report

COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBER TASK GROUP - COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Overall Purpose of the Task Group

To make recommendations to the Cabinet Member - Community on the future provision of a community transport service by Lichfield District Council having regard to:

- Cost of the service (with a view to reducing the subsidy provided by LDC)
- Current and projected levels of need for a community transport service
- Performance of the service and trends over time
- Customer feedback on the service
- Market for community transport (ie alternative transport providers)
- Strategic context locally and countywide

Outcomes from the Task Group

1. Increased knowledge and understanding among Members regarding the planning and delivery of community based transport services
2. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing community transport service and the opportunities and constraints facing the service
3. Identification and appraisal of options for the in house service going forward; identification of a preferred option
4. Progress report to the September meeting of the CHH O&S Committee setting out findings
5. Final report to the January meeting of the O&S Committee setting out recommendations for consideration and response by the Cabinet Member

Lines of Enquiry

1) What options are there for reducing the cost to LDC of the community transport service?

- Could fixed costs be reduced?
- Could grant income be increased?
- Could passenger income be increased?
- Could business be expanded?

2) What other providers are there in the market? What service do they provide? At what cost? What are their future plans? This would include:

- Community Transport for the Disabled
- Voluntary Driver Scheme (delivered by Lichfield and District CVS)
- Ring and ride
- Other public sector providers of a transport service (eg. Social Care and Health of the County Council, schools)
- Taxi service
- Commercial bus service
- Private hire of accessible vehicles

3) What strategic issues need to be taken into account?

- LDC strategic priorities and business needs (including budgetary pressures)
- SCC plans and priorities including a) Staffordshire Cares b) Subsidised transport (section 63 duty on SCC to meet public transport needs)

Practical Arrangements

- The Task Group will be Chaired by Councillor Mark Warfield
- Other Members will include Councillors Mrs Evans, Isaacs, Leytham and Salter
- The Task Group will meet at a frequency determined by the Membership
- The Chairman of the CHH O&S Committee and Cabinet Member Community may attend Task Group meetings from time to time
- Witnesses may be invited to attend the Task Group to provide 'expert advice'

Terms of reference approved 18th August 2011

COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBER TASK GROUP - COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

MEETING SCHEDULE AND WORK PROGRAMME

Meeting 1 - 18th August 2011

Objective: Develop Members' knowledge and understanding of the in house community transport service

Agree terms of reference for the Task Group

Presentation about the community transport service covering governance, funding arrangements, performance trends, costs, customers etc

Consider lines of enquiry (as set out in terms of reference) and what should be done when

Agree next steps

Meeting 2 - 20th September 2011

Objective: Deal with Line of enquiry 1 'What Options are there for reducing the cost of the community transport service?'

Look around community transport buses; explanation of access arrangements, removal of seating etc

Consider budget for community transport and potential to reduce costs

Consider charging regime and potential to increase charges (to include feedback from customer survey conducted in 2010 and modelling of different charging regimes)

Consider trends in business turnover / growth and identify opportunities for expansion (together with associated factors such as the need for additional volunteer drivers)

Prepare for next meeting and agree issues to be explored with other providers

Letter to be sent to other providers inviting their attendance at meeting 3 and outlining areas to be covered including outline of service they provide / operating arrangements, customer profile, funding arrangements, future plans etc

Meeting 3 - 27th October 2011

Objective: Deal with Line of enquiry 2 'Analysis of other providers'

Present outcome of desk top research to consider provision of accessible vehicles available to Lichfield residents, charging regime etc. This would cover private sector transport such as minibus hire and taxis

Invite 'expert witnesses' from the following to present to Members and answer questions:

- Community Transport for the Disabled (Colin Share)
- Voluntary Car Scheme (Rose Vakis + Manager of the scheme?)
- Transport Manager from Social Care and Health, SCC?
- Representative from Ring and Ride?

Meeting 4 - 24th November 2011

Objective: Deal with Line of Enquiry 3 'Strategic context'

Invite 'expert witnesses' from the following to present to Members and answer questions

- Social Care and Health, SCC - impact of ageing population and Staffordshire Cares - Marie duQuesnay
- Graham Hunt, Community Partnerships Officer, SCC - leading on the Burntwood Community Transport Project
- Highways, SCC - state of play on subsidised public transport, section 63 requirements Transport Act - Charles Soutar, Head of Integrated Transport and Planning, SCC

Meeting 5 - December/January

Objective: Take stock of findings and start to prepare recommendations

Consider and comment on draft report

Review effectiveness of Task Group and identify any learning points