

Community Transport Funding 2019/20 – 2020/21

Report of the Planning Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That the recommended funding of £18,530 for 2019/20 and £18,975 for 2020/21 for Community Transport be agreed in principle.

SUMMARY:

- This report seeks the in principle agreement to fund Community Transport for 2019/20 – 2020/21.
- By agreeing the funding it would enable Hampshire County Council to incorporate the details within their retendering exercise and provide clarity for any future operators submitting tenders

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council provides support to community organisations and projects through a number of funding schemes. This enables those organisations to provide specific services that improve the quality of life for residents of Test Valley. One element of this is the provision of Community Transport. This is an essential service for those without a car, with mobility issues or suffering from social exclusion.
- 1.2 The County Council has undertaken a review of the Community Transport operating model and future funding arrangements as part of the wider review of resources. This has led to a retendering exercise due to start later this year, for an initial two year period of 2019/20 – 2020/21.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to confirm in principle the Council's funding for Community Transport for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

2 Background

- 2.1 The 14 February 2018 Cabinet agreed the allocation of funding for a number of voluntary sector groups for a three year period from April 2018 until March 2021.
- 2.2 However, at that time, there was uncertainty over future funding for Community Transport as Hampshire County Council (HCC) were reviewing their approaches to funding and had only confirmed a one year allocation of funds for 2018/19, pending the outcome of that review.

- 2.3 The Council identified an estimate of likely funding of £18,883 for 2019/20 and £19,032 for 2020/21 but given the uncertainty recommended that “...*funding for Unity Community Transport Scheme and Shopmobility be approved for 2018/19 only whilst HCC carry out review and reallocation of funds. A report for further funding (2019-2021) will then be reported to Cabinet separately.*”
- 2.4 HCC are now at the stage where the review is complete and they are intending to retender the Community Transport contract. They are seeking confirmation from the Council on the scale of future funding. It should be noted that they are not requesting the funding in advance.
- 2.5 This report does not cover the future funding of Shopmobility. This work is ongoing and will be the subject of a separate Cabinet report.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan ‘Investing in Test Valley’ was published in April 2015. The corporate priority of “Contribute to and be part of a strong community” promotes the important role that the voluntary sector plays in the everyday life of the Borough and identifies the need to ensure that our funding is targeted to where it is most needed and can be used most effectively.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 As part of their review of Community Transport HCC are looking at the number of services, service specification, vehicle replacement dates, and patronage data. This additional information is intended to complement HCC’s ‘user engagement exercise’ which started in mid-July 2018 and involved mailing each user of the service.

5 Options

- 5.1 The option to consider is whether funding for 2019/20-20/21 is provided, or not.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 HCC will be re-tendering community transport contracts in the autumn so that new contracts will be in place for 1 April 2019. HCC are proposing to award these contracts for an initial 2 year period with the option to extend for up to a further 4 years (six year term in full).
- 6.1 HCC are seeking confirmation from the Council of the amount of funding which will be available to support the operation of services for the two year period from 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2021. The funding available to operate services for the initial two year contract term needs to be declared as part of the tender.
- 6.2 The County have estimated the cost to Test Valley of supporting Community Transport service of £18,530.55 for 2019/20 and £18,975.28 for 2020/21. This is lower than the estimates included within the February 2018 Cabinet report (as set out in section 2 of this report).

- 6.3 By confirming the funding for 2019 – 21 it provides a degree of certainty for whichever operator may be successful through the tendering process and allows for candidates to submit a more detailed proposal. This is the preferred option.
- 6.4 The alternative is that the Council does not provide the commitment to future funding. As HCC have already committed to the retendering exercise to not identify the estimated grant would result in operators submitted proposals based on a reduced scale of funding. This would have an impact on those members of the community who make use of the service.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's Risk management process and the existing risk controls in place mean that no significant risks (Red or Amber) have been identified.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The cost of this proposal can be contained within existing resources.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications for the Council in the recommendations.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report indicate that further risk assessment is not needed because the changes/issues covered do not represent significant risks or have previously been considered by Councillors.

11 Other Issues

- 11.1 The provision and supporting alternatives to the private car helps sustainability and addressing a climate change.
- 11.2 All wards/communities may be affected by Community Transport

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 12.1 This report seeks the in principle agreement to fund Community Transport for 2019/20 – 2020/21. This would enable Hampshire County Council to incorporate the details within their retendering exercise and provide clarity for any future operators submitting tenders.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

None

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	N/A
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(Portfolio: Planning) Councillor Adams-King

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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	10 October 2018
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