



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Executive Members for  
Health & Wellbeing  
Ref No: JAW/029/20-21  
19 March 2021

Decision to be taken on or after  
29 March 2021

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: All

**Adur and Worthing Community Transport Grants  
Allocation of funds for 2020/21**

**Report by the Director for Communities**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

This report requests Adur and Worthing Councils' Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing to consider the allocation of the 2020/21 Community Transport Grants budget.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Executive Members approve the allocation of the Community Transport Grants Budget on the terms set out in this report.

## 2. Context

- 2.1. Community Transport is the term widely used for not-for-profit passenger transport that is not available to the general public, often specialist in helping a particular cohort or demographic. It is accessible and flexible, run by the community for the community, and includes car schemes, door-to-door minibuses, community bus services and group transport. Community Transport often addresses needs not met by public transport.
- 2.2. Community Transport gives a wide range of economic, social and health benefits such as accessibility, inclusion, social interaction and independence. It connects people, reduces loneliness and isolation, and provides better access to community resources. Money and resources invested in Community Transport (regardless of by whom) is widely demonstrated as well spent, and saves money elsewhere.
- 2.3. For a number of years, Adur and Worthing Councils have assigned a healthy budget to this area. This financial year, the total budget is £31,290 in Worthing and £20,000 in Adur.
- 2.4. Following review of Community Transport, In June 2018, the Councils' Joint Strategic Committee approved an option to change the Community Transport budget to grant funding. This meant that any organisation offering Community Transport in Adur and Worthing would be eligible to apply. The purpose of this decision was to broaden and better coordinate the market, so that new collaborations could be developed amongst providers and new audiences reached.
- 2.5. Since this time, Community Transport Sussex (CTS) have successfully been awarded the grants from the November 2018 and July 2019 rounds, to support the infrastructure of Community Transport in Adur and Worthing until 31st March 2019.
- 2.6. One of the clear conditions through grant awards has been for CTS to support Dial-A-Ride Southern Services (DARSS), who held the contract prior to the change to grant funding. This was to ensure that there was no impact to the Dial-a-Ride services to Adur and Worthing residents.

- 2.7. CTS has also provided ongoing support to DARSS around Human Resources, wider-income generation, new vehicles, new booking software, new office premises and peer support for staff and trustees.
- 2.8. Over the last two years CTS have been working with a range of different organisations including Age UK, Sussex Clubs for Young People, Springboard to name just a few. CTS have been able to broker agreements to share assets for the benefit of both the organisation and the community. The connection of assets with infrastructure support has meant that underutilised vehicles can be brought back into operation. It has also increased the financial sustainability of organisations through sharing of running costs, as well as vastly improving the efficiency of use through better scheduling of journeys and in turn contributing towards lower carbon emissions.
- 2.9. The benefits of providing funding to support the infrastructure of community transport for our residents has been clear. This can be evidenced through the number of journeys now being accessed, which has doubled since the grant has been awarded to CTS. For the community, as above, transporting people to venues and spaces where they can access services/ support reduces isolation, loneliness and increasingly CTS are able to provide those first steps for people who may need that extra confidence to leave home.
- 2.10. The Community Transport Grants for 2020/21 opened in September 2020 and the deadline was 2nd October 2020. It was an online process and publicised via the Councils' website. The Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing agreed that one round should take place in this financial year.

### **3. Issues for consideration**

- 3.1. There was one application from Community Transport Sussex to consider for this round and the total requested amount was £61,630. The application is summarised in Appendix one.
- 3.2. Due to COVID-19 there was a delay in this grant being launched. The grant was therefore split to recognise the ongoing support/ activity needs of community transport providers through the pandemic. Applicants were invited to apply for the period April 20-Sept 20 based on support activity related specifically to COVID-19 with applications from October 20- March 21 considered on future activity needs.

- 3.3. However, it should be noted that since the launch of the grant the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to grip the County and restrict the ability of community transport providers to operate in the usual way. Therefore funding support for this sector is much more pressing to ensure resilience for the future.
- 3.4. The overarching aspiration of the Community Transport Grants is for funding to be awarded to an expert third sector organisation that can take on the role of facilitating groups working in this field, by providing an infrastructure support function. This would replicate a similar function to that of Community Works, but solely to benefit Community Transport locally. The benefits of this approach would not only enable better day-to-day operational support, such as, sharing of expertise, knowledge and best-practice, assets, governance and IT systems - but would also would strengthen and build the wider-market, help test that real 'need and want' locally and help encourage the investment to this area from other investors. Without this type of infrastructure support, there is the risk that organisations duplicate effort, fragment services and purchase more vehicles that sit underutilised.
- 3.5 The Councils have established a Community Transport Network in order to connect people and start the awareness and cohesion of Community Transport locally and the benefits of working collaboratively together.

#### **Recommendation for this funding**

- 3.6 Due to the aspirations and the desire around Community Transport to provide funding to support an expert third sector organisation to work alongside other groups to provide infrastructure support, it is proposed that the total Community Transport Grant budget is again awarded to

#### **Community Transport Sussex (CTS).**

- 3.7 The rationale for this recommendation is based on the evaluation of the work carried out by this organisation already in Adur and Worthing, having successfully applied for the grant last financial year and that previous. It is also in recognition of the value that CTS brings in supporting community transport in an infrastructure role, such is evident in their work with Dial a Ride Southern Services.
- 3.8 As a priority, the recommended stipulation of the grant is that CTS work with Dial a Ride Southern Services to implement their merger, whilst

continuing to work with other groups to develop their delivery, share expert management and trustee support and IT systems, as well as financial support to help with the day to day running of the operation.

- 3.9 The nature of their role also means that CTS will also provide support, guidance and advice to all other Community Transport Providers in Adur and Worthing.
- 3.10 CTS will look to use sustainable transport options wherever possible to reduce the environmental impact of local Community Transport. They will also work on asset sharing, which includes those vehicles held by other transport providers, such as West Sussex County Council.
- 3.11 CTS will continue to be an advocate and voice for Community Transport nationally, drawing on their experience to challenge national decisions and improve the local provision. For example, their CEO is on a Board which is working with the Government over licence changes which may have a huge impact on charity and school use of minibuses.

#### **4. Engagement and Communication**

- 4.1. Due to the work undertaken for the Community Transport Review, relationships with providers in this field have been widened and strengthened. There is now a Community Transport Network meeting, which has met twice to date. The distribution list for this group is now at 33. There is also closer work underway with private hire vehicles, knowing that Community Transport doesn't start and end with minibuses.
- 4.2. The Community Transport Grants were advertised through the Councils website.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. The budget available for the Community Transport Grants is £20,000 from Adur District Council and £31,290 from Worthing Borough Council for the period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.
- 5.2. The Councils' Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing both supported the Council Officer recommendation to hold just one round for this financial year.

- 5.3. It is recommended that all of this money is allocated to Community Transport Sussex. By committing the full amount, this will enable them to financially support Dial a Ride Southern Services - as well as other local priorities. A Service Level Agreement has been in place for the previous year and can be modified to take into account service delivery within the pandemic period.
- 5.4. If the Councils' Executive Members for Health and Wellbeing agrees with this recommendation, there will be no remaining budget for this financial year.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.
- 6.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 6.3 The Council may approve an award of grant funding for specific purposes as recommended in this report, although the Council must ensure that the provisions of the grant funding agreement does not create a public contract as defined by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 by requiring any works or services in exchange for the funding for the benefit of the Council.
- 6.4 The Council must ensure that the arrangement with the grant recipients does not offend the rules against state aid, which prohibit public bodies from favouring certain undertakings and distorting competition and ought to reasonably enquire into any previous aid received by the intended grant recipients and assess each recipient's previous grant aid on an individual basis.

### **Background Papers**

Community Transport Grants [Priorities and Criteria](#)

Allocation of Community Transport Grant - [2019-2020](#)

Joint Strategic Committee Paper - [June 2018](#)

Joint Strategic Committee Decision - [June 2018](#)

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Improving the local Community Transport offer will have an impact on the local economy as residents will be better connected with leisure and wellbeing activities as well as businesses. The day to day running of Dial a Ride Southern Services will not be impacted by this decision and in time, will become even better.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

Overall, this decision can only be positive for residents because there will be better cohesion, communication and collaboration of the transport options available to them. It will also increase the wellbeing of residents as they will be able to access places and service more easily.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

The project aims to make Community Transport accessible to all cohorts that are vulnerable, particularly those who are under represented

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

The environmental impact of Community Transport will be improved as alternatives to mini buses are already being considered. Assets - vehicles - will be much better used across the area, in collaboration with partners such as West Sussex County Council.

### **4. Governance**

The Councils always ensure due diligence on organisations receiving public money. An agreement will be put in place with Community Transport Sussex ensuring an agreed delivery and support of Dial a Ride Southern Services.

## Appendix One - summary of groups applying

Application One
Community Transport Sussex (CTS)
£61,630 for 'Community Transport delivery and support'
In Adur District and Worthing Borough Council areas
<p>A request has been made for £61,630 by CTS to further build on the work they have been carrying out in Adur and Worthing. The ultimate aim of their project is to reduce social isolation and deliver safe, accessible and affordable community transport to all those who have difficulty accessing community transport.</p> <p>They mainly do this indirectly by supporting and strengthening community transport schemes in Adur and Worthing but also directly through the merger with Dial-A-Ride where they have helped increase residents' use. They have completed a partnership agreement working with Age UK W-Sx to bring many more people into their day clubs and providing home deliveries. They are engaging with town and parish councils to develop and support volunteer led car schemes.</p> <p>Throughout the last year CTS, in addition to normal business lines provided patient transport to support the vaccination programme, home deliveries working closely with food groups to distribute to those in need and also provided transport to health professionals to take services to communities.</p> <p>CTS have a proven track record of success across wider Sussex and this is now evident in their work in Adur and Worthing having increased income, resident usage, shared vehicles and systems for DARSS. They currently support 450 community groups with community transport in Sussex.</p>