



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

ADC Cabinet Member for
Communities & Wellbeing
WBC Deputy Leader
Ref No: JAW/007/22-23
Decision to be taken on or after
1 September 2022

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: All

**Adur and Worthing Community Transport Grants
Allocation of funds for 2021/22**

Report by the Director for Communities

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

This report requests Adur District Council's Cabinet Member for Communities & Wellbeing and Worthing Borough Council's Deputy Leader to consider the allocation of the 2021/22 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, July 2019 and September 2020 rounds, to support the infrastructure of Community Transport in Adur and Worthing until 31st March 2021.
- 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 few 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 2021/22 opened in February 2022 and the deadline was 25th February 2022. It was an online process and publicised via the Councils' website, Councils' Social Media and also through Community Works. 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 are three applications to consider for this round and the total requested amount was £117,000. The applications are summarised in Appendix one.
- 3.2. Due to COVID-19 there was a delay in this grant being launched. The grant therefore recognised the need to be flexible in either supporting work already underway or activity that is planned for the future.

- 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. In recent times, Community Transport Sussex have taken over the facilitation for this, with the support from the Councils.

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 years 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 over the past few years.

- 3.8 As a priority, the recommended stipulation of the grant is that CTS work with Adur Voluntary Action (AVA), to support their work in Adur, developing their delivery, sharing expert management and trustee support and IT systems, as required. It is recognised that AVA provides a valuable service to groups, organisations and the community of Adur, and as such should benefit from the skills/ experience of CTS. 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.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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. It should be noted that due to COVID, this group has been on hold, but is due to recommence shortly. 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, Councils social media platforms and through Community Works.

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 2021 to 31st March 2022.

- 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 continue to support and provide services within Adur & Worthing. 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 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides that the local authority has discretionary powers to award grants to local groups or organisations for purposes which may bring a direct benefit to the area or any part of it or all or some of their inhabitants. The Council must ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or residents is commensurate with the expenditure incurred.
- 6.2 s1 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
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 A Grant Funding Agreement will be entered into with each successful group, and care must be taken to ensure that the agreement does not create a public services or works contract. In addition, the Council must ensure that the arrangement with the grant recipients does not offend the rules must not offend the rules on Subsidies the primary legislation for which is found at section 29 of the EU (Future Relationship) Act 2020 which (until further specific domestic legislation is implemented) incorporates the EU/UK Trade and Co-Operation Agreement.

Background Papers

Community Transport Grants [Priorities and Criteria](#)

Allocation of Community Transport Grant - [2020-2021](#)

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 services 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)
£62,000 for 'Community Transport Development across Adur & Worthing'
In Adur District and Worthing Borough Council areas
<p>A request has been made for £62,000 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, which took place in 2021, where they have helped increase residents' use. In 2021/ 22 and beyond they are working to further develop their community transport offer through developing new services, helping grow volunteer car schemes, implementing their travel buddy scheme and electric vehicle car clubs by the end of 2023.</p> <p>COVID has restricted the growth of CTS over the last year or so, however it has highlighted those who are newly isolated as a result of the pandemic. These typically have been those people in our communities who traditionally wouldn't have access to community transport, but have now lost confidence in using public transport, are anxious about reconnecting with restrictions lifted and those who have lost their employment, who are struggling to meet the costs of transport. This will be a key development area for CTS, over the next year. CTS will also be re-engaging with Sompting & Lancing Parish Councils, as they are keen to support the mitigation of the loss of potentially 16 bus services.</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 with a range of over providers and the merger with DARSS. They currently support 450 community groups with community transport in Sussex.</p>

Application Two
Adur Voluntary Action (AVA)
£5,000 for 'Adur Voluntary Action's Community Transport'
In Adur District
<p>A request has been made for £5,000 by AVA to cover the costs of running their fleet of vehicles, paying drivers and marketing their offer to local groups, organisations and individuals.</p> <p>COVID has had a profound effect on the ability of AVA to run its community transport service. This has meant a reduction in the number of hirers accessing the service, as well as drivers, who have been worried about the risks of volunteering.</p> <p>AVA's service has been running since 2015 and their role is to provide groups with the ability to overcome social isolation in Adur, to socially interact and make friends. They have good local connections with groups and organisations who need the use of a reasonably priced minibus.</p> <p>AVA have identified the need for service development in Lancing in particular, where schools are oversubscribed and a large community centre has closed. AVA plans to support the community by offering shuttles, to enable greater connection between services/ facilities that are reasonably priced. However, in order to do this, they would need funding to support the paid employment of drivers. They are confident that they can provide these services to pre pandemic levels with the support of a grant to cover basic operating costs, from which they would then be sustainable.</p>

Application Three
The Russell Martin Foundation
£50,000 for 'Purchase of 2 x 18 Seater Minibuses & Driverst'
In Adur District and Worthing Borough
<p>A request has been made for £50,000 by The Russell Martin Foundation & Academy to cover the costs of purchasing two, 18 seat minibuses.</p> <p>One of the proposed vehicles would be utilised for the ExtraTime Project in Worthing, which provides support to those young people who are struggling in mainstream</p>

secondary schools. The second proposed vehicle would be used by the Foundation to transport children to and from deprived areas to attend their football academy.

The ability of the Foundation to access vehicles is significantly important in being able to access other facilities with the young people in their care. They have been struggling to take up offers to libraries, educational trips, gymnasiums without access to transport. COVID has had a profound effect on the ability of AVA to run its community transport service. This has meant a reduction in the number of hirers accessing the service, as well as drivers, who have been worried about the risks of volunteering.