

## **Community Transport Policy**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present the Community Transport Policy to Members for comment and approval.

### **2. Recommendations**

#### **2.1 It is recommended that the Executive:**

##### **2.1.1 Approve the Community Transport Policy**

### **3. Links to the Corporate Objectives**

3.1 This report links to the following two Corporate Plan priorities:

- i. Equality and Diversity: including young people and older people. To celebrate the diversity of the District and its residents and ensure everyone has access to our services and facilities.
- ii. Buoyant Economy: to have a diverse and flexible local economy.

3.2 Under the latter priority a key action for 2005/06 is to:

‘Develop a Council approved strategic approach towards sustainable community transport by March 2006’.

### **4. Background Information**

4.1 For a number of years the Council has supported some community transport schemes but there has never been any rationale as to why; and conversely why the Council has not supported others. It was recognised that this situation needed to be addressed and a system implemented that allowed schemes to be dealt with in an equitable manner.

4.2 Consequently, the Corporate Plan identified the development of a Policy that addressed these issues and concerns as an action to be completed (also in the Economic Regeneration Strategy) and it was, therefore, built into the Community and Environment work plan (under the Council priorities given in 3.1).

### **5. The Policy**

5.1 The development of the Policy has been led by the Regeneration Working Group consisting of Councillors Gill Offord, Christine Reid and Peter Roberts. The Group met on 28<sup>th</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> October of this year, with the document being progressed by officers in between meetings. Consultation was undertaken internally with officers of the Regeneration and Asset Management Team and the Community Partnership Team, and externally with the Community Transport Team at Community First. It was recognised fairly early in the process that a policy, rather than a strategy, would be sufficient for the purpose.

- 5.2 The Policy (attached as Appendix A) is fairly concise, totalling 16 pages (including cover and contents page). The first few sections (5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 below) give the background information whilst the sections entitled 'The Future of Community Transport in North Wiltshire' and 'Process and Funding of Schemes' form the actual Policy.
- 5.2.1 Introduction – gives the background as to why there are accessibility problems for some sections of the community and the extent of the problem.
  - 5.2.2 What is Community Transport? – gives a definition of community transport, the different types in operation and the benefits offered by community transport.
  - 5.2.3 Community Transport in North Wiltshire – outlines the schemes currently in operation in the District and their area of operation.
  - 5.2.4 Community Aspirations – summarises the results of the consultation work undertaken as part of the Community Plan process, where they relate to specific transport issues.
  - 5.2.5 The Future of Community Transport in North Wiltshire – puts forward a six point set of criteria against which schemes can be judged, these being: need, connectivity, effectiveness, support, cost and sustainability.
  - 5.2.6 Process and Funding of Schemes – the first part of this section introduces the idea of applying a matrix scoring system to the above criteria so that judgements become less subjective. There are many such scoring systems that could be utilised and the point here is not to recommend a single model but the concept. This section also signposts to Appendix 2 that gives more detail on funding.
  - 5.2.7 Bibliography – purely a list of the sources used in putting together the policy.
  - 5.2.8 Appendix 1 – details the levels of funding given to community transport schemes in 2005/06.
  - 5.2.9 Appendix 2 – examines the potential source of funds over and above the existing community transport budget that could be utilised for new schemes coming forward for support. This identifies Area Committees for one-off projects (capital and revenue) and recommends making virements from the bus revenue support budget for short-term (maximum of two years) revenue support.
- 5.3 The Policy does not aim to make the funding process overly bureaucratic or to penalise schemes that are currently receiving funding from the Council. Nor does it promise significant extra funds to support new projects, it does, however set a framework and identifies a flexible approach to funding new projects where previously this had not been possible.
- 6. Financial Implications**
- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report as the Policy recommends using existing budgets to fund any schemes coming forward.

**7. Human Resources and Equal Opportunities Implications**

7.1 There are no human resource or equal opportunity implications associated with this report.

**8. Community and Environmental Implications**

8.1 The adoption of the Community Transport Policy will give clear guidance on the Council's approach to the subject, making it easier for partners to work with us and therefore offering significant benefits to the community.

**Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report**

- Community Transport Policy

**REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC MANAGER TO THE EXECUTIVE - 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005.**

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