



10 January 2013

Agenda Item:4

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GROWTH FUND AWARDS

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the allocation of £95K funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) supporting Community Transport fund to establish and develop Community Transport services across Nottinghamshire.

Background

2. Over the last two years the County Council has accepted £316,910 from the DfT's Supporting Community Transport Fund. The funding can be used for capital or revenue purposes but not to replace existing County Council funding. To date £200,000 of the fund has been committed to:-
 - Purchase of two specialist passenger service vehicles
 - Delivery of driver training
 - Appointment of an Independent Travel Training Officer
 - Publicity and marketing events
 - IT improvements
 - Establishing a new minibus scheme in Newark
3. The Grant Aid Committee at its meeting on 26th November 2012 noted the details of the spending to date and were informed of proposals to introduce a Local Community Transport Growth Fund which would develop and enhance community transport provision across the County. It is proposed to allocate an amount of £95,000 to the Growth Fund with the balance (£21,910) being reserved for arrangements which may occur at a later point , such as start-up costs for new community transport services. The funds will be distributed through a bidding and evaluation process. In addition there is a separate process that allows for the community transport operators to bid for Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding (£75,000) for small specialist passenger vehicles similar to those recently deployed by the sector in the Eastwood and Stapleford areas.
4. Growth Fund applications were invited from Nottinghamshire Community Transport providers (Minibus and Voluntary Car Schemes) during November 2012.
5. Applications have been assessed against the following criteria:
 - How they meet the strategic objectives outlined in the County Council's Mobility Strategy and TITAN project.

- Did they meet the DfT guidance on the use of funding?
- How they support development and capacity building such as:
 - Preparation for Level 1 or 2 of the Community Transport Association (CTA) Quality Mark
 - Operating accessible vehicles for a 'Car Scheme Plus'
 - Professional support to develop business plans
 - Enhancing publicity and marketing
 - Training for staff or volunteers
 - Upgrading office equipment and IT
 - Upgrading vehicle equipment
 - Volunteer recruitment campaigns
- How they demonstrate commitment to the provision of Minibus Driver Assessment Scheme (MIDAS) training for all volunteer staff to ensure a professional and consistent approach to quality customer care and safety.
- Ability to demonstrate that there is a gap in community transport provision within their operating area.
- Show that these activities can be sustained at the end of the project without on-going revenue support from the County Council

Proposed Awards for the Community Transport Growth Fund

6. A total of 13 bids covering 17 schemes were submitted to the County Council from Community Transport operators. The quality and content of the bids received were of a very high standard. The value of bids totals £277,704 which exceeds the funding available. In most cases it is proposed that a proportion of the bid is funded.
7. Three schemes have expressed an interest in LTP funding for a Car Scheme Plus Vehicle – Bassetlaw Action Centre, Tuxford and Our Centre (Kirkby-in-Ashfield).
8. Bids have been assessed against weighted criteria with the over-riding principle of prioritising funding for those projects that deliver the best outcomes for Nottinghamshire residents.
9. It is proposed to award £94,375 of funding as detailed in the Appendix. This will support the establishment; growth and development of Community transport across the County and improve the already excellent services provided by the sector. The funding will enable operators to provide training, recruit volunteers and offer more capacity thus enabling more people to use their services. Successful bids will be managed through a Service Level Agreement and the outcomes from the investment will be reviewed and monitored as the projects progress. All projects and spend will be completed by April 2014.
10. If a third round of similar funding is allocated by the DfT in 2013/14 then it is proposed that further top up funding is distributed to the projects.

Other Options Considered

11. Do nothing – If the funding was not used for the development of Community Transport in Nottinghamshire then it is likely that the wider strategic aims for the Council's Mobility Strategy and TITAN project would not be so readily achieved including the associated efficiency savings.

Reason for Recommendation

12. The recommendations in this report deliver the best outcomes for Nottinghamshire residents.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for service users

14. The development of community transport provision across the County will enhance the opportunity for people who cannot use mainstream services, to access key services, visit friends and improve their quality of life.

Financial implications

15. The financial implications are outlined in the report

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee

- 1) Consider and approve the funding allocation outlined in the Appendix.
- 2) Accept further DfT funding if it is allocated in 2013/14 and agree that it be used to top up the successful bids approved in this report.

Mark Hudson

Group Manager, Transport and Travel Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Pete Mathieson

**Team Manager, Passenger Transport Travel and Development
Transport and Travel Services**

Constitutional Comments (SHB 12.12.2012)

16. Committee have power to decide the recommendations.

Financial Comments (DJK 12.12.2012)

17. The successful bids would be carefully analysed and ensure that the funding is used for the purposes stated within the bid process.

Equal Opportunities

18. The use of this external funding will provide additional opportunities for people with mobility difficulties to access key services.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mobility Strategy Action Plan - March 2011.

TITAN Project Members Working Group - 25 January 2012

Briefing note to TITAN Project Members Working Group - 5 March 2012

Transport and Highways Committee reports – 12th July and 22nd November 2012

Grant Aid Committee 26th November 2012

Growth Fund – Assessment criteria and weightings

Electoral Division) and Members Affected

All.