

Report to	<b>Scrutiny Committee for Transport and Environment</b>
Date	<b>26 November 2009</b>
Report By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Title of Report	<b>Draft Bus Strategy and Community Transport (CT) pilots</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To consider the progress made on the draft Bus Strategy consultation and Community Transport pilots</b>

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**RECOMMENDATIONS: To consider the current progress on:**

- 1. The draft bus strategy consultation; and**
  - 2. The Community Transport Pilots.**
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**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The draft bus strategy action plan and the expansion of community transport (CT) will require additional work by a range of teams in T&E, and by other organisations in East Sussex. Our contribution will be contained within existing budgets.

1.2 There is a total of £250,000 available to support the development of CT schemes in East Sussex. The figure includes a £50,000 grant from the Department for Transport (DfT) associated with the "Down Your Way" project together with a further allocation in the current financial year allocated to this priority as part of the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RP&R) exercise. Both sums of money are one-off and the funds will therefore be targeted to develop sustainable (i.e. becoming self financing), community-led transport schemes. The pilots will take account of the experience in East Sussex in recent years in recognising the importance of community transport being community-driven where the communities themselves have 'ownership' of the service.

1.3 It has taken some time to develop the approach to CT schemes and it is likely that some £50,000 to £70,000 will remain unspent at the end of this financial year and will be 'ring-fenced' and carried forward to 2010/11 to fund further projects once they are approved.

**2. Supporting Information**

***Bus strategy consultation***

2.1 The bus strategy consultation, launched in September 2009 for a period of 90 days, seeks views on our current bus provision and priorities for services. I will provide an update to the meeting on comments received to date.

***Community Strategy pilots***

2.2 As reported in July, we are developing community led CT schemes to support our vision of working in partnership to ensure that existing CT schemes continue to improve the quality of life for users. CT schemes often rely heavily on volunteers and support from others such as parish or town councils and we are working to engage them and partners such as district councils, primary care trusts (PCTs), and other agencies in pooling resources, expertise, advice and support to help develop local solutions to local transport needs.

2.3 We invited bids in July from CT operators for new schemes and 13 applications for funding were received. These were evaluated against agreed criteria (including social inclusion and sustainability) at a meeting of Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) and ourselves on

16 September 2009. Of the 13 schemes, seven were approved and six declined. The seven successful bids are set out at Appendix 1 and funding of some £50,000 in total has been granted to those schemes. Some are now underway with the rest coming due to be implemented before Christmas.

2.4 We have met with county councillors whose areas have been chosen for a CT scheme as well as officers from the relevant district councils to inform them of the development process and to highlight which of their parishes are included in the project. We have also met with PCT representatives to understand health needs in the areas selected to enable us to deliver joint solutions for access to health facilities and services.

2.5 A project team comprising officers from Transport and Environment, Adult Social Care and Children's Services departments together with representatives from AiRS and PCT's will facilitate local discussions and generate new interest for further schemes. These discussions may take place through individual parish and community group meetings or larger events which allow clustered parish areas to join discussions. The aim is to cluster adjacent parishes and consequently deliver more sustainable and flexible schemes. The outcome of these discussions will lead to further schemes being approved and funding being allocated from the remaining £200,000 available.

2.6 Filming has taken place to produce a promotional DVD and this highlights a handful of the schemes that currently exist in the county, featuring those benefiting from the schemes. The DVD demonstrates to others how they can become involved and set up a CT scheme for their community with our support. .

2.7 Identification of schemes has begun and some schemes have started. We anticipate the remaining funds being allocated to new schemes from Spring 2010. This will be followed by comprehensive evaluation programme to both inform the CT strategy and to continue to support communities .

### **3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

3.1 The current consultation of the draft bus strategy for East Sussex will help the County Council to prepare plans for the future of bus services in the county, with a final bus strategy returning to cabinet in early 2010 for approval and adoption.

3.2 The pilot CT schemes aim to deliver:

- sustainable CT schemes, we envisage receiving applications from 15-20 communities;
- a framework/model for further CT schemes;
- a toolkit to enable communities to bid for CT 'start up' funding;
- final report and recommendations on the performance of the pilots including costs and impact;
- clarity for us in determining our future role in relation to the development of the CT sector in the county.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Transport and Environment

17 November 2009

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Local Member: All

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

## Appendix 1

Funding bids were received from CT operators and these were evaluated based on how they meet identified needs of communities and whether they are sustainable. We are currently issuing one-off grant funding to the seven successful schemes shown below and it's anticipated that all schemes will be operational by the end of the year.

Scheme	Award
<p><b>1. CTLA – Telscombe/Peacehaven/Newhaven Dial a Ride:</b> Community Transport for the Lewes Area applied for a grant to set up a Telscombe, Peacehaven and Newhaven dial a ride service. This bid was successful and will receive grant funding.</p>	£10,200
<p><b>2. Age Concern – Uckfield</b> Age Concern in Uckfield will receive funding towards their service which assists elderly citizens with transport to hospitals and clinics.</p>	£500
<p><b>3. CTLA – Eastbourne Dial a Ride</b> North Wealden Community Transport Partnership will receive finance towards their door to door shopping service as well as group educational and leisure outings. In addition to the existing participating parishes, they expect to include Buxted, Rotherfield, Hadlow Down and parts of Uckfield.</p>	£10,200
<p><b>4. NWCTP</b> A grant will be provided to Community Transport for the Lewes Area to provide a dial a ride service in Eastbourne.</p>	£4,000
<p><b>5. Heathfield Partnership – Youth Bus</b> The Heathfield Partnership Youth Bus will receive a grant towards transport for the Skool + Project, regular trips to the Youth Centre for night sessions, weekly trips to the Leisure Centre for swimming, Duke of Edinburgh trips, as well as other one off trips.</p>	£10,000
<p><b>6. Heathfield Partnership – Outings</b> The Heathfield Partnership will receive funding towards the Heathfield Extended Service which will facilitate the transport for a number of group excursions to a range of destinations.</p>	£5,000
<p><b>7. Rye &amp; District CT Group Hire</b> Rye &amp; District Community Transport successfully bid for funding towards an evening transport service to take groups out for evening leisure activities.</p>	£3,000