

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Agenda

Date:	Monday, 6th February, 2017
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. Public Speaking Time/Open Session

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relevant to the work of the body in question. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

For requests for further information

Contact: Cherry Foreman

Tel: 01270 686463

E-Mail: cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Allocation of Transport and Accessibility Grants** (Pages 3 - 22)

To consider the allocation of grants funded through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year.

5. **Allocation of Surplus Vehicles to Community and Voluntary Groups** (Pages 23 - 36)

To consider the allocation of surplus vehicles to a number of organisations.

Cheshire East Council

Portfolio Holder Highways and Infrastructure

Date of Meeting: 6th February 2017

Report of: Frank Jordon – Executive Director for Place

Subject/Title: Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants funded through Sustainable Travel Transition Year

Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Brown – Deputy Leader of the Council; Highways and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. In June 2016, Cheshire East Council was successful with a bid for funding for £350,000 from the Department of Transport's (DFT) Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund (STTY) which is now available for delivery up to March 2017 in the Crewe and Nantwich area.
- 1.2. The Council's bid document for STTY outlined the programme of delivery which included the allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants, with £20,000 from the STTY grant, being allocated towards this funding element of the programme
- 1.3. In October 2016, the Council launched a campaign to raise awareness that local organisations, in the Crewe & Nantwich area could apply for Transport and Accessibility Grants of up to £9,999. The campaign was promoted in local media, social media and on the Cheshire East website. Three organisations applied for funding.
- 1.4. The purpose of the grants is to support local people to develop community-led initiatives. It is recognised that local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport and accessibility needs and these grants will enable the successful organisations the capacity to develop local solutions.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Highways and infrastructure approves the allocation of a grants to two of the three community organisations, who have applied, these being;

- Community Recycle Cycles £9,999
- Christian Concern £9,500

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. This project is externally funded by Department of Transport and was allocated via a competitive bidding process. A copy of the bid document is available at:
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx. It contains full details of the bid, the targets we have agreed to achieve, and the costs and benefits. All projects are outlined within the bidding document and need to be in line with the objectives listed.
- 3.2. The Northern Development Gateway Zone was targeted since the area has the highest potential for growth and the highest levels of economic inactivity, with barriers to growth and employment caused partly by transport issues. Other areas in Cheshire East were unlikely to be successful in the bidding process because of the requirement for transition funding from previous LSTF work.
- 3.3. The option of not offering the grants to local communities was considered but it was felt that as the programme had previously been so successfully in a previous and similar project (Local Sustainable Transport Fund) that local communities would, once again, welcome the opportunity of being able to apply for this funding.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The assessment for the applications has been based on the criteria outlined in the 'Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants', which mirrors the STTY objectives, these being;

Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants

- Access to services
- Disadvantaged groups
- Community Involvement
- Financial Sustainability
- Other funding sources

Name of organisation	Details of organisation	Details of bid	Score out of 9.8 and reason for recommendation	Grant requested

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Community Recycle Cycles CIC	Works with volunteers and young people under the supervision of a CY-Tech L2 cycle mechanic who refurbishes donated bicycles and provides repairs at affordable prices. Runs Dr Bike sessions.	Wishes to expand existing services including Dr Bike to residents living in areas around Crewe. Costs to cover, staffing costs, management costs, workwear, publicity material, leaflets, banners	8.5 The application scores highly and meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the TAG policy.	£9,999
Christian Concern	A charity since 1987 that collect and redistribute furniture, food and cycles. Engage with local people to broaden their skill base and experience.	Continue to work with trainees and appoint a further trainee for a 12 month period on a cycle maintenance programme. Work with after school clubs (14 – 16) on a cycle maintenance course to respond to queries from parents about the need for such a training programme	8.5 The application scores highly and meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the TAG policy.	£9,500
Motherwell CIC	Supports local woman on Mental Health and well-being issues.	To extend existing “Happy Feet” project promoting fresh air and walking. Wishes to train 3 additional volunteers	4.2 This application does not meet the criteria outlined in the policy as it does not enable people to access work, education or skills	£2,995

- 4.2. It should be noted that Community Cycle Recycles do not currently have two signatures on their bank account. However, they have committed to resolving this issue prior to receiving any grant from Cheshire East Council.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council has been successful in winning two of the Department of Transport (DfT) funding rounds for grants to support economic growth through sustainable travel and transport. The previous grant entitled Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which ended March 2015, enabled the Council to award grants to local community groups. These grants have been monitored and have shown to be successful with bringing benefits to the local community.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. Crewe South, Crewe East, Crewe St Barnabus, Crewe Central, Leighton, Crewe North, Nantwich North & West and Nantwich South & Stapeley.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. The policy for the 'Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants' is shown in Appendix 1.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The STTY grant is awarded from the DfT on the understanding that the authority will deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid.
- 7.2.2. The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making any decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably. A grant policy is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying and is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision making process. The Allocation of Transport and Accessibility Grants policy has already been approved by Cabinet.
- 7.2.3. In accordance with the Constitution and paragraph 1.20 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers the making of grants to voluntary and community organisations is not delegated to Officers. Grants up to £50,000 shall be for the decision of the relevant Portfolio Holder and grants over £50,000 shall be approved by Cabinet

7.2.4. The assessment criteria outlined in the policy provide a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants. The value of the grants to be issued under this policy (up to £9,999) does not necessarily require a formal Grant Agreement. However, the policy sets out a monitoring process to ensure that grants are used appropriately in line with the application and conditions for funding.

7.2.5. As part of the application form, organisations are required to disclose any other sources of funding to assess and guard against any potential state aid issues. It is unlikely that organisations have been or will be allocated grant funding in excess of the current de minimis levels applicable to state aid but it is prudent to monitor any potential state aid.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The STTY programme is fully funded by a grant from the Department of Transport (DfT). The policy seeks to award grants of up to £9,999 on a match fund basis to communities located in Crewe and Nantwich. All funds which are awarded will be claimed in full from the DfT, in line with the Grant Agreement between the Council and the DfT. For the STTY programme, £20,000 has been allocated for this funding period

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment was written for the Sustainable Travel Transition Year bid and posted on the Cheshire East Website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx

7.5. Rural Community Implications

7.5.1. Grants are available to communities located within the Northern Gateway Development Zone. This zone was identified by the Cheshire East Council bid for funding to the DfT

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. There are no human resource implications

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. There are health benefits from promoting walking and cycling and an increase in the uptake of active travel.

7.8. Implications for Children and Young People

7.8.1. Children and Young people who are able to access the local community group's initiatives will benefit by learning about cycle maintenance.

7.8.2. There will be an opportunity for a trainee to learn about cycle maintenance with a potential to move into a future career. A previous trainee, working for Christian Concern, has obtained a job with Halfords.

7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.9.1. There are no other implications.

8. Risk Management

8.1. The policy makes clear that grants are awarded specifically for the purpose stated in the application and that should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may become liable to return the monies paid.

8.2. To ensure expenditure in line with the approved grant application and compliance with funding conditions, the policy sets out a monitoring process providing suitable safeguards to ensure that grants are spent appropriately and deliver value for money (etc). Failure to provide monitoring information within the timescale may result in the Council recovering the grant paid.

8.3. By launching and implementing the policies identified above, there is an opportunity to support grassroots initiatives and empowering local people to community-led initiatives, as well as supporting sustainable travel to help unlock the growth potential of Crewe. Failure to implement the policy will delay such initiatives.

8.4. Before the grant is awarded, successful applicants must sign a copy of a grant award acceptance form and agree to accept the terms and conditions of the grant as set out in the Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

9.1.1. A copy of the STTY bid can be found at:
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx.

10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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APPENDIX 1

POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY GRANTS

October 2013

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1.0 Introduction

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- What cannot be funded
- General Conditions

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme is to support local people to develop community-led initiatives which improve access to essential services, such as healthcare, shopping, leisure and other destinations that are important to local residents.
- 1.2 The types of initiatives which may be supported include transport schemes, as well as measures which improve the availability of services locally within the community thereby reducing the need to travel. This reflects that the term “accessibility” is not just about transport, but also how services (e.g. shops) are planned and delivered.
- 1.3 In order to reflect the broad nature of the transport and accessibility agenda, the Grant Scheme is framed around four themes and priorities which indicate the types of activities the Council are seeking to support. These are:
- Theme 1: Vibrant Rural Communities
 - Theme 2: Community Transport Initiatives
 - Theme 3: Encouraging Active Travel
 - Theme 4: Publicity & Information
- 1.4 The Grant Scheme aims to help deliver the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy¹ (Ambition for All) and the associated Local Transport Plan² (LTP), particularly the policies within the LTP relating to ‘Nurturing Strong Communities’, which include:
- **Policy C1 Community:** Work in partnership with local communities to support community-led solutions that improve accessibility to key services (employment, education, health, shopping and leisure).
 - **Policy C2 Accessibility of Services:** Work with partner organisations and local communities to make key services easier to access with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups and areas, including people living in rural areas, older people, young people and those without access to a car.
 - **Policy C3 Access for all:** Consider the diverse range of needs concerning disabled people and other groups who experience difficulties using the transport system.
- 1.5 When using the term “grants” in this policy, it refers to the giving of a fixed amount of Council funds to organisations through an application and assessment process. This policy sets out the eligibility criteria to apply, as well as the criteria for assessing grant applications, the process for decision-making, governance arrangements and the monitoring requirements of the Grant Scheme.

¹ www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/community_and_living/pace_strategic_partnerships/sustainable_community_strategy.aspx

² www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cohesive, empowered and active communities in which people can influence the decisions that affect their locality is at the heart of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East. It is recognised that local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport and accessibility needs and in some cases have the capacity to develop local solutions.
- 2.2 Many communities across the borough have a history of self help and coming up with innovative ways of serving local people, whether it is giving someone a lift to a doctor's appointment, establishing a Good Neighbour Scheme or saving a post office by relocating it to the local pub. This can be particularly important in rural areas where access to mainstream services is more difficult.
- 2.3 The Council are seeking to work in partnership with local community groups and voluntary organisations to understand the range of transport and accessibility needs at a local level and work together to support community-led solutions wherever possible. There are clear opportunities through the Grant Scheme to support the development of grass roots initiatives and empower local people to develop a range of community-led solutions.

3.0 LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 This policy has been approved by Cheshire East Council's Cabinet who have delegated authority for the assessment of applications and the decisions on award of grants to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment (or subsequent Cabinet Member with responsibility for transport).
- 3.2 The decisions on award of grants will be based on the Assessment Criteria set out in section 6 of this policy, which provides a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants.
- 3.3 The budget for each funding round is fixed prior to inviting applications, so that there is clarity on the limited amount of money available in each bidding window. Given the fixed budget and the Council's aim to benefit as many organisations as possible, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for; therefore organisations must ensure that they have procedures in place to cover any balance of funding required, or else funding may not be awarded.
- 3.4 As part of the launch of each funding round, a proportion of the available budget will be set aside to advertise the Grant Scheme and ensure that potential / eligible applicants are aware of the scheme through appropriate communications.

4.0 TYPES OF FUNDING

4.1 The Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme operates two tiers of funding based on the value:

- **Small Grants** of up to £9,999 to pump-prime small scale projects, or to co-fund a larger initiative. Applications which include match funding from other sources will be considered more favourably in the assessment process, however the Council will consider applications for 100% funding. In any case, the Council cannot guarantee to fund the maximum amount applied for.
- **Larger Grants** over £10,000 to pump-prime new larger scale projects or extend an existing initiative. The Council will expect applicants to provide evidence of match funding from their own organisation or another organisation to support the scheme. Applicants seeking a larger grant will be required to submit the application form as an expression interest, which will then be assessed and, if shortlisted, a more detailed business case setting out the costs, benefits and plans for future sustainability will be required. Successful applicants must also sign a Grant Agreement with the Council.

4.2 The purpose of operating two tiers of funding is to support a variety of schemes and initiatives. Where there is capacity within the community to start a new large scale project which brings significant community benefits by improving access to services, the Council would like to work in partnership with these organisations to nurture, grow and develop community-led initiatives.

5.0 FUNDING THEMES

5.1 The Grant Scheme is framed around four themes which reflect the broad nature of the transport and accessibility agenda, as well as indicating the types of projects and activities which may be supported through the scheme.

- **Vibrant Rural Communities** – Connecting people in rural communities with key services is an activity which faces both challenges and opportunities. The challenges include greater distances to travel, less concentrated levels of demand for public transport and the loss of some local services. There are also clear opportunities to work in partnership with communities to develop local solutions to meet local needs. Through the Grant Scheme, the Council is seeking to support initiatives which improve access to services – whether it is a transport solution (e.g. voluntary car scheme) or improving access to services locally which avoids the need to travel longer distances to towns. This could include multi-use premises (e.g. establishing a shop in the village hall). It is recognised community facilities can become a focal point and hub of a village with significant social benefit, which avoid people becoming isolated and socially excluded in their community.

- **Community Transport Initiatives** – Local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport needs and in some cases have the capacity to develop local solutions, particularly for those who do not have access to public or private transport. Through the Grant Scheme, the Council is seeking to support innovative community transport solutions which are operated “by the community, for the community” and are tailored to local needs. This could include a developing a community bus scheme or shopmobility service to meet an identified need and enable people to access local services.
- **Encouraging Active Travel** – The aim is to encourage increased levels of active travel for local everyday journeys. The Council view walking and cycling as key modes of transport which are a fundamental part of the integrated transport network in Cheshire East. Through the Grant Scheme, the Council is seeking to support activities which promote and facilitate active travel, which may include cycle confidence training, network maps or a local campaign to encourage more people to walk and cycle more regularly.
- **Publicity & Information** – It is recognised that lack of information and awareness of travel options can be a barrier to accessibility in local communities. There is significant scope to increase the publicity and promotion of the range of travel choices including bus, rail, cycling, walking, as well as the range of community transport initiatives. Through the Grant Scheme, the Council is seeking to support local communities in developing information specific to their residents or user groups in a style and format which meets the local needs of the community.

5.2 Please state on the application form which theme(s) you are applying for in your small grant application or expression of interest for a large grant.

6.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

6.1 The criteria for assessing applications are set out below.

Criteria	Description
Access to Services	The project must improve access to key services and make it easier for residents to get to health care, shopping, leisure facilities and other essential services. Ideas which show innovation and creativity are encouraged.
Disadvantaged Groups	Projects which have a particular focus on disadvantaged groups or areas, such as disabled people, older people, young people and those without access to public or private transport, will be scored more highly.
Community Involvement	Applications must demonstrate a high level of community involvement, or the ability to increase community involvement and attract more participants/volunteers through the project.

Financial Sustainability	The aim is for schemes to be sustainable beyond the initial grant funding period and continue to benefit the community into the future. Applications must demonstrate the potential for the project to be sustained in the future.
Other Funding Sources	Applications which have funding contributions from the organisations own funds and/or funding support from other bodies in place or promised will be scored more highly in the assessment.

7.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

7.1 Who can apply

To qualify to apply for a grant, organisations must meet the criteria listed below:

- Operate within the Cheshire East Borough Council area;
- Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation;
- Be a Town or Parish Council that can match fund at least 50% of the projected scheme costs;
- Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and be able to provide such information as reasonably required in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisations financial position and its need for the assistance requested;
- Have a constituted management committee with a signed constitution. Informal organisations who do not yet have a signed constitution may still be eligible to apply, but must commit to establishing a management committee and submitting a signed constitution prior to any award of grant;
- Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation where children, young people or vulnerable adults are involved, which must include a requirement that staff / volunteers must be cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service; and
- Have their own bank or building society account with two signatories.

7.2 How to apply

- All applications for a grant must be made using the “Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme Application Form”, which is available on the Council’s website or as a paper version on request;
- The application form must be completed in full – incomplete forms will be rejected;
- Applicants will need to include a copy of their signed constitution, or a written commitment to submit a signed constitution prior to any grant payment, as well as the supporting documentation listed in section 8 of the application

form. If these documents are not provided then the application will be treated as incomplete;

- Applicants will be notified of the closing date for submission of applications;
- All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as per section 6 of this policy.

7.3 What cannot be funded?

- Organisations which hold substantial free reserves, including local branches of national or regional organisations which hold free reserves that could be utilised;
- Work which has already taken place before receipt of offer letter;
- Individuals;
- General appeals, sponsorship or fundraising for national or local charities (including local branches) or other local organisations;
- Activities of a mainly political nature;
- Refreshments and/or accommodation;
- Projects or activities organised for the sole benefit of students of a school or college;
- Projects or activities for the sole benefit of organisations that derive the majority of funding from other Council sources or Council funded clients (e.g. day centres);
- Events which do not involve members of the local community participating;
- Repair costs where deterioration is due to neglect;
- Loan against loss or debt;
- Land purchase;
- Disabled facilities where the upgrading is required for an existing facility to meet the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010;
- Organisations which are not based in Cheshire East, unless they can demonstrate significant community benefits within Cheshire East.

7.4 General Conditions

Financial Management & Monitoring

- Grants are classed as one-off and applicants should not assume any further Council funding beyond the initial grant;
- Organisations successful in applying for a small grant (up to £9,999) will be required to sign a Grant Offer Acceptance Form confirming that the grant will be spent in line with the application and terms and conditions of funding. Organisations that are successful in applying for a large grant (over £10,000) will be required to sign a Grant Agreement with the Council;
- Expenditure must not be incurred on the project, activity or initiative prior to the grant decision being given. In these circumstances the Council will withdraw the grant offer/rescind the grant decision;

- Organisations who are in receipt of other funding from the Council may apply to this grant scheme if the project is considered to provide an additional service to that already funded;
- All other sources of funding must be clearly stated in the application form;
- Any surplus from the project must be used to further develop the organisation or for any future transport and accessibility projects and not used to support other organisations;
- Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
- If the project or activity is cancelled, or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, any unused grant money must be returned to the Council;
- All conditions under which the grant has been awarded, including any additional conditions stipulated at the time of the award, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the organisation being asked to repay the grant award to the Council.

Implementation - Monitoring & Compliance

- Grants are awarded specifically for the purpose stated in the application. Should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may become liable to return the monies paid;
- Any vehicles, whether leased, hired or purchased, must be insured against loss, theft, accidental damage (etc) for the period of the grant and a reasonable period thereafter;
- If the project involves work on land or a building, the applicant must own the freehold of the land or the building, or hold a lease that can not be brought to an end by the landlord for at least 5 years;
- Invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Council's Transport Team after 6 months and again after 12 months (if applicable) of the date of offer letter. Failure to provide this information within the timescale may result in the Council recovering the grant paid;
- A monitoring report describing the project (including photographs) and summarising the transport outputs and how the community has benefited must be submitted on completion, or within 12 months of the date of offer letter.

Equality Opportunities

- Organisations must be committed to and have policies on Equal Opportunities and provide a copy of its equalities policy. Organisations must not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, disability, religious belief or non belief, marital status or sexual orientation, but can direct some or all of its activities at specific groups where the intention is address discrimination or disadvantage.

Communication & Promotions

- Organisations must acknowledge the support of Cheshire East Council in press releases, publicity and advertising (etc);
- The organisation will allow Cheshire East Council to use details of the grant award, together with any relevant photographs supplied, in newsletters and on the Council's website.

8.0 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 8.1 Following the closure of the bidding window for each funding round, a detailed assessment of each application will be undertaken in line with the assessment criteria outlined above. The Transport Team will prepare a recommendations report to be considered by the Portfolio Holder.
- 8.2 A Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting will then be held to decide on the grant awards. Following this meeting, a Portfolio Holders report is circulated to all elected members by Democratic Services, allowing for a 5 day call in period. Should any objections be made during the 5 day call in period a further Portfolio Holder meeting is held to discuss the objection(s) and adjust as is necessary.
- 8.3 There may be a need to add special conditions to the award of some applications to ensure that the purpose of the funding is achieved. For example, if a project is dependent on other sources of funding being secured then a conditional offer may be made. These special conditions may be recommended by officers, by the Portfolio Holder or following call-in of the decision.
- 8.4 If there are no objections (or after the follow up meeting), the applicants are notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not as soon as possible after the call in period has ended and generally within 6 weeks after the closing date for applications.
- 8.5 All decisions are final.
- 8.6 Complaints about any aspect of the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy is available on the Council's website³.

9.0 MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

- 9.1 Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, as set out in the conditions for funding, a monitoring process will take place throughout the duration of the project.

³ www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/customer_services/complaints_and_feedback.aspx

- 9.2 The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support the delivery of a project / initiative in line with the original application. Invoices or receipts must be forwarded to the Council's Transport Team after 6 months and again after 12 months (if applicable) of the date of offer letter. Failure to provide this information within the timescale may result in the Council recovering the grant paid.
- 9.3 The organisation will allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 9.4 Organisations need to retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).
- 9.5 A monitoring report will be required on completion of the project, or within 12 months of the date of offer letter, which shall include (but shall not be limited to):
- A description of the project and how the grant money was used;
 - How many people benefitted from the project;
 - The characteristics of the people who benefitted;
 - Photographs of the project or initiative in action;
 - If any surplus was made and how it was used;
 - Plans for continuing the scheme in future; and
 - What difference the project made to the organisation and/or local people.
- 9.6 If organisations do not supply the required monitoring reports, in full and within the set time scale they will not be eligible to apply to the scheme again and may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council.

**Policy & Accessibility Team
Cheshire East Transport
October 2013**

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Highways and Infrastructure

Date of Meeting:	6 th February 2017
Report of:	Frank Jordan – Executive Director for Place
Subject/Title:	Allocation of Surplus Vehicles to Community & Voluntary Groups
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr David Brown – Deputy Leader of the Council; Highways and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The Council recognises the valuable role of the community and voluntary sector in providing access to essential services for residents. Local schemes and initiatives have wider social benefits through increasing independence and reducing isolation, particularly in rural communities.
- 1.2 Transport Service Solutions (TSS) Limited has recently entered into a long term contract hire arrangement for the provision of a fleet of new minibuses. As a result, the Council has 8 vehicles which are surplus to requirements. Accordingly, these vehicles are available for gifting to local organisations in the community and voluntary sector.
- 1.3 The Council has a policy for allocating surplus vehicles to the community and voluntary sector to help support community-led transport initiatives, tailored to the needs of local residents (see Appendix 1). The aim is to support local communities by providing means to improve access, particularly for disadvantaged groups, to services including health care, shopping and leisure facilities.
- 1.4 In summer 2016, the Council launched a competition and invited organisations to complete an application form to be allocated a surplus vehicle. In total, 16 applications were received and all were assessed in line with criteria outlined in the policy. The policy supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan outcomes such as creating cohesive communities, accessing learning and skills and promoting healthy lifestyles, as well as delivering against the Council's Local Transport Plan objectives.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Infrastructure approves the allocation of surplus vehicles to the organisations listed below.

Applicant	Decision
1nclu5ive Sandbach	Award
Mobility & Access Group (MAG)	Award
Healthbox CIC	Award
Cheshire Fire Authority (Princes Trust)	Award
Wishing Well Project	Award
Church of the Resurrection	Award
Disability Information Bureau	Award
Space4Autism	Award

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1 The option to sell the vehicles at auction with the income going back into Cheshire East capital receipts was considered. Appraisal of the market value of the vehicles was completed and this has informed the view that, taking account of the age of the fleet vehicles, any capital receipts would not be significant.
- 3.2 In conjunction with colleagues in Communities, it was considered that greater value could be achieved from an initiative to gift the vehicles to community groups in line with the Council's Policy for the Allocation of Surplus Council Vehicles to Community & Voluntary Groups (adopted in October 2013).

4. Reasons For Recommendation

- 4.1 All applications have been assessed and scored against the criteria contained in the policy, which provides a fair and equitable way to assess applications and allocate vehicles. The criteria are:

Criteria	Description
Access to Services	The vehicle must be used to improve access to key services and make it easier for residents to get to health care, shopping, leisure facilities and other essential services. Ideas which show innovation and creativity are encouraged.
Disadvantaged Groups	Projects which have a particular focus on disadvantaged groups or areas, such as disabled people, older people, young people and those without access to public or private transport, will be scored more highly.
Community Involvement	Applications must demonstrate a high level of community involvement, or the ability to increase community involvement and attract more participants/volunteers through the project.
Sustainability	The aim is for schemes to be sustainable beyond the initial grant funding period and continue to benefit the community into the future. Applications must demonstrate the potential for the project to be sustained in the future.
Other Funding Sources	Applications which have funding contributions from the organisations own funds and/or funding support from other bodies in place or promised will be scored more highly in the assessment.

5. Background / Chronology

- 5.1 The Policy for the Allocation of Surplus Vehicles to Community & Voluntary Groups was approved by Cabinet in October 2013. In 2013/14, 9 vehicles were gifted to the community under the policy with the aim of supporting community-led activities which improve access to essential services such as healthcare, shopping, leisure and other destinations that are important to residents. There is considered added social value in adopting this approach in terms of increasing independence and reducing isolation, particularly in rural communities.

6. Wards affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1 All Wards and Ward Members.

7. Implications of Recommendations

7.1 Policy Implications

- 7.1.1 An approach which seeks to gift surplus vehicles to appropriate community and voluntary organisations has clear links to the Council's Corporate Plan objectives / outcomes for;
- Strong & supportive local communities are encouraged by enabling community groups to play a greater role in meeting transport needs.
 - Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place through greater opportunities for group transport using local community buses.
 - People live well and for longer by enabling greater access to healthcare and life opportunities which help people engage in society, especially in rural areas.
 - A responsible, effective and efficient organisation by re-using surplus vehicles in a cost-effective way.

7.2 Legal Implications

- 7.2.1 The Policy for the Allocation of Surplus Council Vehicles to Community & Voluntary Groups was approved by Cabinet who have delegated the authority for the assessment of applications and the decisions on award of grants to the relevant Portfolio Holder with responsibility for transport.
- 7.2.2 Each organisation offered a vehicle must sign an agreement to confirm that they will become the owner and registered keeper of the vehicle in its current condition as of the date of transfer. The agreement will confirm that they will pay all the future running costs

of the vehicle, including service, maintenance, Tax, MOT and appropriately insure and license the vehicle for the purposes outlined in their application form.

- 7.2.3 The Council has the power to gift vehicles which are surplus to requirement using its general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In essence this means that in making any decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably.
- 7.2.4 As part of the process, organisations should be required to disclose any other sources of grant funding to assess and guard against any potential state aid issues. It is unlikely taking into account the current value of the vehicles that gifting the vehicle would mean that organisations have been or will be allocated aid in excess of the current de minimis levels applicable to state aid but it is prudent to monitor any potential state aid.

7.3 Financial Implications

- 7.3.1 There are 8 Council-owned vehicles which are surplus to requirements and ready to be allocated to community and voluntary organisations. The vehicles vary in age ranging from 11 years old (2006) to 8 years old (2009).
- 7.3.2 The estimated value of these vehicles at sale by auction is approximately £25,750 to £29,750. In donating the vehicles to local organisations, these capital items will be written off to enable the development of community-led transport initiatives which are tailored to local needs.
- 7.3.3 The application and assessment process require initiatives to improve access to service, particularly for disadvantaged groups, which would be costly for the Council to provide as part of the supported bus network.

7.4 Equality Implications

- 7.4.1 All decisions to award the vehicles will be based on the assessment criteria set out in the policy which provides a fair and equitable way to assess the applications and allocate the vehicles.
- 7.4.2 Applications which have a particular focus on disadvantaged groups or areas (i.e. disabled people, older people and young people) are scored more highly in the assessment process. This supports the Council's aim to be an area of equal opportunity where everyone has

a fair chance and can take part in community life in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy.

7.5 Rural Community Implications

7.5.1 Many rural communities across the Borough have a history of self-help and developing innovative ways of serving the needs of local people. This can be particularly important in rural areas where access to mainstream services, including commercially-operated public transport, can be more difficult.

7.5.2 The gifting of surplus Council vehicles to these groups will support the development of grass-roots initiatives and empower local people to further develop these initiatives.

7.6 Human Resource Implications

7.6.1 There are no human resource implications.

7.7 Public Health Implications

7.7.1 The aim of allocating surplus Council vehicles to the community and voluntary sector is to help support community-led transport initiatives that will improve access to key services such as healthcare, shopping, leisure and other destinations that are important to local residents. The social aspect will also provide long term benefits to the community and improve health and wellbeing.

7.8 Implications for Children and Young People

7.8.1 Initiatives which improve accessibility have wider benefits which include reducing isolation and social exclusion. Promoting and enabling passenger transport which is accessible to children and young people to enable them to take part in the wider community activities will be of great benefit, especially to those without access to a car or who already have difficulty in using the existing transport system through disability or disadvantage.

7.9 Other Implications

7.9.1 There are no other implications.

8. Risk Management Implications

- 8.1 Following the completion of an application process that was publicised to community and voluntary groups throughout the Borough, a decision not to proceed with the gifting the vehicles is likely to cause reputational risk to the Council.
- 8.2 Each organisation offered a vehicle must sign an agreement to confirm that they will become the owner and registered keeper of the vehicle in its current condition as of the date of transfer.

9. Access to Information / Bibliography

- 9.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report author:

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POLICY FOR THE
ALLOCATION OF
SURPLUS COUNCIL VEHICLES TO
COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY GROUPS

October 2013

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council's Transport Service has a number of fleet vehicles that are surplus to its requirements and wishes to release the vehicles for use by local community and voluntary groups across the borough.
- 1.2 The aim of allocating surplus vehicles to the community and voluntary sector is to help support community-led transport initiatives that will improve access to key services such as health care, shopping and leisure facilities. The types of schemes which may be supported by the gifting of a vehicle include community bus schemes operated "by the community, for the community".
- 1.3 Allocating vehicles to local communities aims to help deliver the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy¹ (Ambition for All) and the associated Local Transport Plan² (LTP), particularly the policies within the LTP relating to 'Nurturing Strong Communities'.
- 1.4 When using the term "allocation" or "gifting" of vehicles in this policy, it refers to the giving of a Council vehicle to community and voluntary organisations through an application and assessment process. This policy sets out the eligibility criteria to apply, as well as the criteria for assessing applications, the process for decision-making, governance arrangements, and the monitoring requirements of the scheme.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cohesive, empowered and active communities in which people can influence the decisions that affect their locality is at the heart of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cheshire East. It is recognised that local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport and accessibility needs and in some cases have the capacity to develop local solutions.
- 2.2 Many communities across the borough have a history of self help and coming up with innovative ways of serving local people, whether it is giving someone a lift to a doctor's appointment, or establishing a Good Neighbour Scheme or Communicare Scheme. This can be particularly important in rural areas where access to mainstream services is more difficult.
- 2.3 The Council is seeking to work in partnership with communities to understand the range of transport needs at a local level and work together to support community-led solutions wherever possible. The gifting of a council vehicle to these groups will support the development of grass roots initiatives and empower local people to develop a range of community-led solutions.

¹ www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/community_and_living/pace_strategic_partnerships/sustainable_community_strategy.aspx

² www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/local_transport_plan.aspx

3.0 LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 This policy has been approved by Cheshire East Council's Cabinet who have delegated authority for the assessment of applications for the allocation of a vehicle to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment (or subsequent Cabinet Member with responsibility for transport).
- 3.2 On each occasion that the Council has a pool of vehicles which are surplus to requirements and ready to be gifted to community groups, a bidding round will be launched inviting applications from community and voluntary groups. Please note that the Council will not purchase vehicles with the sole aim of gifting to community groups.
- 3.3 The Council aims to benefit as many organisations as possible; however, given the limited number of vehicles available and the potential number of community groups who may wish to be gifted a vehicle, a competitive application process has been developed. The Council therefore cannot guarantee that all applications for a surplus vehicle will be successful. All decisions will be based on the assessment criteria set out in section 4.3, which provides a fair and equitable way to assess applications and allocate vehicles.
- 3.4 As part of the launch of each bidding round, a proportion of the available budget will be set aside to advertise the opportunity and ensure that potential / eligible applicants are aware of the scheme through appropriate communications.

4.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 Who can apply

To qualify to apply for a vehicle, organisations must meet the criteria listed below:

- Operate within the Cheshire East Borough Council area;
- Be a voluntary or community organisation, registered charity or other not for profit organisation;
- Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and be able to provide such information as reasonably required in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisations financial position and its need for the assistance requested;
- Have a constituted management committee with a signed constitution. Informal organisations who do not yet have a signed constitution may still be eligible to apply, but must commit to establishing a management committee and submitting a signed constitution prior to any award of grant;
- Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation where children, young people or vulnerable adults are involved, which must include a

requirement that staff / volunteers must be cleared with the Disclosure and Barring Service; and

- Have their own bank or building society account with two signatories.

4.2 How to apply

- All applications for a vehicle must be made using the “Application Form for the Gifting of a Surplus Council Vehicle”, which is available on the Council’s website or as a paper version on request;
- The application form must be completed in full – incomplete forms will be rejected;
- Applicants will need to include a copy of their signed constitution, or a written commitment to submit a signed constitution prior to any grant payment, as well as the supporting documentation listed in section 8 of the application form. If these documents are not provided then the application will be treated as incomplete;
- Applicants will be notified of the closing date for submission of applications;
- All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as per section 6 of this policy.

4.3 Criteria for allocating vehicles

The criteria which all applications will be assessed and scored against are:

Criteria	Description
Access to Services	The vehicle must be used to improve access to key services and make it easier for residents to get to health care, shopping, leisure facilities and other essential services. Ideas which show innovation and creativity are encouraged.
Disadvantaged Groups	Projects which have a particular focus on disadvantaged groups or areas, such as disabled people, older people, young people and those without access to public or private transport, will be scored more highly.
Community Involvement	Applications must demonstrate a high level of community involvement, or the ability to increase community involvement and attract more participants/volunteers through the project.
Sustainability	The aim is for schemes to be sustainable beyond the initial grant funding period and continue to benefit the community into the future. Applications must demonstrate the potential for the project to be sustained in the future.
Other Funding Sources	Applications which have funding contributions from the organisations own funds and/or funding support from other bodies in place or promised will be scored more highly in the assessment.

4.4 General Conditions

- The gifting of a vehicle is classed as one-off;
- Before the vehicle is released to a successful applicant, the organisation must sign an agreement to confirm that they will become the owner and registered keeper of the vehicle in the condition as of the date of transfer. The agreement will confirm that the organisation will pay all the future running costs of the vehicle, including service, maintenance, Tax, MOT and appropriately license the vehicle for the purposes outlined in their application form;
- Organisations who are in receipt of other funding from the Council may apply for a vehicle if the project is considered to provide an additional service to that already funded;
- All other sources of funding must be clearly stated in the application form;
- Any surplus from the project must be used to further develop the organisation or for any future community transport projects and not used to support other organisations;
- Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used;
- All conditions under which the vehicle is awarded, including any additional conditions stipulated at the time of the award, must be met;
- Vehicles are allocated specifically for the purpose stated in the application;
- A monitoring report describing the project (including photographs) and summarising the transport outputs and how the community has benefited from use of the vehicle must be submitted on completion, or within 12 months of the date of offer letter;
- Organisations must be committed to and have policies on Equal Opportunities and provide a copy of its equalities policy. Organisations must not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, disability, religious belief or non belief, marital status or sexual orientation, but can direct some or all of its activities at specific groups where the intention is address discrimination or disadvantage;
- Organisations must acknowledge the support of Cheshire East Council in press releases, publicity and advertising (etc);
- The organisation will allow Cheshire East Council to use details of what the vehicle was used for together with any relevant photographs supplied, in newsletters and on the Council's website.

5.0 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 5.1 Following the closure of each bidding window, a detailed assessment of each application will be undertaken in line with the criteria outlined above. The Transport Team will prepare a recommendations report to be considered by the Portfolio Holder.

- 5.2 A Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting will then be held to decide on the allocation of vehicles. Following this meeting, a Portfolio Holders report is circulated to all elected members by Democratic Services, allowing for a 5 day call in period. Should any objections be made during the 5 day call in period a further Portfolio Holder meeting is held to discuss the objection(s) and adjust as is necessary.
- 5.3 There may be a need to add special conditions to the application to ensure that the purpose of the gifting is achieved. For example, if a project is dependent on other sources of funding being secured then a conditional offer may be made. These special conditions may be recommended by officers, by the Portfolio Holder or following call-in of the decision.
- 5.4 If there are no objections (or after the follow up meeting), the applicants are notified to inform them of whether they have been successful or not as soon as possible after the call in period has ended and generally within 6 weeks after the closing date for applications.
- 5.5 All decisions are final.
- 5.6 Complaints about any aspect of the Community Transport Grant Scheme process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy is available on the Council's website³.

6.0 MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

- 6.1 The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the vehicle and ask for evidence to support an application.
- 6.2 The organisation will allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 6.3 Organisations need to retain records relating to what they have used the vehicle for an appropriate period (to be advised).
- 6.4 A monitoring report will be required on completion of the project, or within 12 months of the date of offer letter, which shall include (but shall not be limited to):
- A description of the project and how the vehicle was used;
 - How many people benefitted from the project;
 - The characteristics of the people who benefitted;
 - Photographs of the project or initiative in action;
 - If a surplus was made and how it was used;

³ www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/customer_services/complaints_and_feedback.aspx

- Plans for continuing the scheme in future; and
- What difference the project made to the organisation and/or local people.

**Policy & Accessibility Team
Cheshire East Transport
October 2013**