

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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**Date of Meeting:** Monday 10 March 2014  
**Report of:** Stephanie Cordon – Head of Communities  
**Subject/Title:** Transport Grant Schemes – Large Grant Business Plans & LSTF Grant Applications  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr David Topping

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### 1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme is a positive way of supporting residents to develop community-led transport initiatives which improve access to services. A total of £80,408 small grant allocations were awarded in January which will lead to positive outcomes for the residents of Cheshire East. The large grant business plan process is now underway with some creative ideas tailored to local needs. For example, one scheme is estimated to deliver 67,500 passenger miles over the first 3 years.
- 1.2 The Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) business travel planning grants support businesses and employers in their aim to encourage more people to walk, cycle, use public transport and car share for local journeys in Crewe. The first funding round in January allocated £38,810 and it is proposed to build on this success by allocating a further £29,582 in the second round, which is funded through the LSTF grant from the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 1.3 This report summarises the evaluation of the large grant business plan submissions (plus one deferred small grant application) and LSTF grant applications in line with the associated policies and assessment criteria – making recommendations on the decision to award, defer or decline.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the outcome of the small grant application deferred from 13 January (TAG 1) and the three large grant business plans (TAG 13, 25, 19) following a detailed evaluation.

Ref No	Organisation	Recommendation
TAG 1	Community Transport, Macclesfield District	Award - £9,999
TAG 13	Poynton Town Council – Minibus Service	Defer - £45,000
TAG 25	Poynton Town Council – Shopmobility	Defer - £20,000
TAG 19	Cheshire Community Action (CCA)	Award - £22,799

- 2.2 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the outcome of each application for the LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant, including one deferral from 13 January (LSTF 8) and all second round applications.

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
LSTF 8	Trax Commercial Ltd (previously deferred)	Award - £4,750
LSTF 11	Barshaw Ltd	Award - £4,999
LSTF 12	Up and Under Group Ltd	Award - £260
LSTF 13	David Williams Cheese	Award - £2,025
LSTF 14	Urban Cheshire CIC	Award - £860
LSTF 15	South Cheshire College	Award - £4,400
LSTF 16	CTC Physiotherapy Ltd	Award - £3,935
LSTF 17	CTC Physiotherapy Ltd	Award - £4,800
LSTF 18	Leonard Brothers Veterinary Centre Ltd	Award - £412
LSTF 19	Christian Concern	Award - £3,140

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 In December, Cheshire Community Action (CCA) and Poynton Town Council submitted expressions of interest for a large grant (over £10,000) through the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme. Both organisations were shortlisted to prepare a more detailed Business Plan setting out the costs, benefits and plans for future sustainability beyond the funding period.
- 3.2 A detailed assessment of each Business Plan has been undertaken in line with the assessment criteria in the "Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants" approved by Cabinet in October 2013 (see table below). The assessment criteria provide a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.

- 3.3 CCA is proposing to deliver a community car scheme in Crewe, Nantwich and the surrounding areas. CCA will recruit volunteer drivers to provide transport to vulnerable residents who require access to essential services. The proposals include detailed financial projections for the first 3 years of the project. The figures for income and expenditure demonstrate that they have a good understanding of all the costs and associated income targets/revenue streams required to sustain the scheme. They anticipate delivering 67,500 passenger miles over the first three years. CCA are requesting a grant of £22,799 and it is recommended to **award** – subject to the signing of a Grant Agreement setting out the terms and conditions of award and the agreed financial profile.
- 3.4 Poynton Town Council is proposing to use a surplus Council vehicle allocated under the Vehicle Allocation Scheme to operate a minibus service. The business plan proposes to administer, promote and market the service to residents in the Poynton LAP area to improve access to services. The project will train volunteer drivers to use the minibus and the submission provides strong evidence of community support. However, the business plan is currently under-developed in terms of financial projections and sustainability. The business plan does not include income and expenditure or demonstrate how the project will be sustained beyond the funding period. It is therefore recommended to **defer**, which will enable the business plan to be developed and considered at a second Portfolio Holder decision meeting on 20 March.
- 3.5 Poynton Town Council also propose to establish a shopmobility scheme in the town which will be located in the Cooperative Independent Living store. The business plan is applying for start up costs to allow residents and visitors with mobility problems access to amenities in the town. The business plan outlines the costs for equipment and servicing charges but doesn't quantify income or revenue streams (e.g. membership or hire fee). The business plan does not demonstrate how the project will be sustainable. It is therefore recommended to **defer**, which will enable the business plan to be developed and considered at a second Portfolio Holder decision meeting on 20 March.
- 3.6 The recommendation to defer provides an opportunity to develop more robust business plans with financial projections and outcomes clearly defined – working towards sustainable projects which will continue into the future.
- 3.7 The LSTF Grant Scheme is aimed at businesses and employers in Crewe. The applications which are recommended for award best meet the criteria in encouraging employees to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share for their journey to and from work, as well as business travel. Annex 1 includes a brief description of each application and the reasons for recommendation.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 Crewe, Nantwich, Poynton, Disley and the surrounding areas.

#### **5.1 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 Crewe, Nantwich, Poynton, Disley and the surrounding areas.

## **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 The policies support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Ageing Well in Cheshire East Programme. Initiatives which improve accessibility have wider benefits including reduced isolation and social exclusion, and improved health and wellbeing. Promoting and enabling passenger transport, walking and cycling supports the climate change agenda through low carbon travel choices. The LSTF business travel planning project directly supports the All Change for Crewe regeneration programme by helping to unlock the growth potential of Crewe.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 In October, Cabinet agreed the allocation of £250,000 for the grant scheme from the approved 2013/14 base budget. The Portfolio Holder decision meeting on 13 January awarded a total of £80,408 for small grant schemes. The recommendations in this report award a further £32,798 – with a cumulative total of £113,206.
- 7.2 Two business plans have also been deferred for decision until 20 March, which have a combined value of £65,000. If subsequently approved, the value of all the small and large grant applications for 2013/14 is £178,206, which is well within the approved base budget.
- 7.3 The LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant Scheme is fully funded by a grant from the DfT. The programme allocation for 2013/14 is £75,000 capital and £18,000 revenue. The Portfolio Holder decision meeting on 13 January awarded a total of £38,810. It is recommended that a further £29,582 is awarded in the second round at the Portfolio Holder meeting on 10 March – bringing the overall totals to £58,338 capital and £10,054 revenue.
- 7.4 The Portfolio Holder decision meetings on 10 March and 20 March would commit the funding in 2013/14 allowing the grant values to be accrued for this financial year.

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The policy for each scheme has already been approved by Cabinet who have delegated the 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).
- 8.2 In all cases there is a condition requiring each organisation to report back to the Council on the expenditure of the grant. Consideration has also been given in each case to the imposition of other appropriate conditions (see Annex 1).
- 8.3 Organisations awarded small grants (up to £9,999) are 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 and ensuring that the grant can be recovered should it not be spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding. Organisations seeking a large grant will be required to sign a Grant Agreement to reflect the higher value of the grant award. The Grant Agreement will set out the terms and conditions of the grant award and will be tailored to each project and the agreed financial profile.

- 8.4 As part of the application form, organisations have been 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 of around £150,000 (200,000 Euros) over 3 years but it is prudent for the Council to monitor any potential state aid.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 The policies relevant to each scheme make 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.
- 9.2 To ensure expenditure in line with the approved grant application and compliance with funding conditions, the grant offer letters / Grant Agreements will set out a monitoring process to provide 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 all or part of the grant paid.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

- 10.1 The associated policy documents are available on the Councils website or LSTF Smarter Ways to Travel web page - [www.allchangeformcrewe.co.uk/smartertravel](http://www.allchangeformcrewe.co.uk/smartertravel)

## **11.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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