

**Agenda Item:**

Audit and Scrutiny <b>7</b>
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# Audit & Scrutiny Committee

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
Officer	Chief Executive
<b>Subject of Report</b>	<b>Review of Community Transport</b>
Executive Summary	<p>Following consideration of a scoping report on 22 July 2014 the Audit and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of Community Transport at their meeting on 25 November 2014.</p> <p>This report sets out the outcomes from the evidence session, held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, to inform a discussion which will recommend to the Cabinet how Dorset County Council can support the types of community transport initiatives that work best in Dorset.</p> <p>It is recommended that the key messages should be taken forward by the Holistic Transport review, as the most appropriate forum for adopting and implementing the recommendations. These should be monitored in an Action Plan which can be reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
Impact Assessment:	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>There are no specific EQIA issues arising from the report, but any arising in the future as a result of their consideration and adoption through the Holistic Transport Review, will be addressed as part of the governance for that review.</p>

	<p>Use of Evidence: The report is based on evidence of previous community transport reports considered by the Cabinet and Audit and Scrutiny Committee, together with the documentation from the Holistic Transport Review which is one of the programmes in the Forward Together Transformation Programme.</p>
	<p>Budget: The current community transport revenue budget is £108,000 (this includes the additional £25k towards community transport initiatives that the Cabinet committed in December 2013). There is also a capital budget of £50,000. The total transport budget is £22m.</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment: Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as: Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk LOW</p>
	<p>Other Implications: None</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Consider and confirm the ten key recommendations (set out in section 2 of the report);</li> <li>2) If Cabinet are in agreement with the recommendations they should be adopted and implemented by the Holistic Transport Review;</li> <li>3) The key messages be monitored in an Action Plan which will be reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ol>
<p>Reason for Recommendation</p>	<p>To support the Holistic Transport Review and Cabinet in the successful implementation of community transport schemes, which are an important element of the Council's work.</p>
<p>Appendices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Key Lines of Enquiry</li> <li>2. Non-emergency patient transport services (PTS) eligibility criteria</li> </ol>
<p>Background Papers</p>	<p>Minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 10 June 2014. Minutes of the Cabinet, 4 December 2013 Scoping Report on Community Transport Review, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 22 July 2014. Review of Community Transport, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 25 November 2014.</p>
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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Following consideration of a scoping report on 22 July 2014 the Audit and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of Community Transport at their meeting on 25 November 2014.
- 1.2 The review had been prompted because the County Council needs to develop an alternative to conventional public transport. The Committee used the key lines of enquiry (set out in Appendix 1) and listened to invitees and their experiences. These included:
- Service user representatives.
  - Commercial operators of community transport initiatives.
  - CCG in relation to Health initiatives.
  - Transport Manager, Devon County Council – cited as best practice.
  - Youth Council representative.
  - Dorset County Council officers responsible for the Holistic Transport Review.
- 1.3 The desired outcomes of the review are:
- To learn from our stakeholders about their needs and how we could collectively provide a more effective overall solution (at less cost).
  - To make recommendations to the Cabinet about the role of Dorset County Council in supporting and working with community transport initiatives.
  - To support the Holistic Transport Review in identifying how Dorset County Council can support the types of community transport initiatives that work best in Dorset.

## 2. Outcomes from evidence session on 25 November

- 2.1 The ten key messages that emerged from the Committee's deliberations were;
- 2.2 Key Message 1: The number of subsidised bus services will continue to face a big challenge. Public transport is therefore not the only answer to an increasing demand for travel. *It is recommended that the Council adopts this as an underlying principle in a revised Transport Strategy.*
- 2.3 Key Message 2: There is a need to define what the Council means by the term 'Community Transport' – what is its scope/coverage? *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review confirms this and it is embedded within the revised Transport Strategy.*
- 2.4 Key Message 3: It is important that a whole network approach and solution is delivered (e.g. public, school and community solutions), which compliments the 'independent living' and 'health and wellbeing' agenda's. *It is recommended this principle is adopted by the Holistic Transport Review.*
- 2.5 Key Message 4: The Council would benefit from a revised Transport Strategy – with specific inclusion and reference to its 'social' transport role. *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review commission this, with Cabinet approval of the revised Strategy.*
- 2.6 Key Message 5: The Council should aim to support and not stifle a thriving environment in which communities can take a lead, embedding the use of co-

production principles. *It is recommended this principle is adopted by the Holistic Transport Review.*

- 2.7 Key Message 6: The Council's primary role should be one of facilitation:
- Looking to provide a support role, not to run or coordinate.
  - Develop a toolkit - advice and guidance
  - To help identify 'gaps' and seek solutions to these
  - To provide a 'signposting' service and a clear communications plan
  - To 'pump-prime' community engagement and operational activity (e.g. start-up; general; and ongoing funding support)
  - A key focus on safeguarding assurances
  - Offer and deliver training provision (e.g. Driving skills, Manual Handling etc.)
  - To provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
  - The POPP's model appears to have resonated with the wider public and their communities and incorporates a number of the principles that the Council should seek to embed further.
  - The Council should help to reduce unnecessary burden / bureaucracy – ensure proportionality.

*It is recommended that the County Council acknowledges these primary aims and objectives be considered for inclusion and adoption by the Holistic Transport Review.*

- 2.8 Key Message 7: The Council should support direct service delivery where it would be helpful to operate a service which 'joins-up' and 'links' with existing community/voluntary provision and increases appetite for new schemes. *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review should develop a commissioning framework which supports direct service delivery where appropriate.*

- 2.9 Key Message 8: There is a need to engage in discussion with other public bodies, especially the various Health bodies (Trust, CCG etc.), to ensure that support and appropriate cost contributions are fair and reflective of the purpose of the travel (e.g. 75-80% of current community transport trips are considered to be health related. Note: The non-emergency patient transport services eligibility criteria are set out in Appendix 2). *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review reflects this within its work programme.*

- 2.10 Key Message 9: The Council should work closer with Youth Groups to develop valued and practical solutions – including those in the revised Strategy. *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review adopts this as a principle and works with the Director for Children's Services to commission.*

- 2.11 Key Message 10: The Council should seek to explore joint commissioning opportunities to maximise value. *It is recommended that the Holistic Transport Review adopts this as a principle and embeds this within its work programme.*

### **3. Next steps**

- 3.1 The key messages that emerged from the evidence session now need to be agreed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and put in a recommendation for the Cabinet. If the Cabinet are in agreement with the recommendations it is suggested that they should be taken forward by the Holistic Transport Review, as the most appropriate forum for adopting and implementing the recommendations.

### **Appendix 1: Key Lines of Enquiry**

- What are the current and future arrangements for conventional transport and is the Council content with these arrangements?
- What type of community transport is there?
- What community transport initiatives are running?
- What geographical area do existing community transport initiatives cover?
- How have the community been involved in the decision making about where they go and don't go?
- How has Dorset County Council money been invested in community transport and what mechanisms are in place to ensure good value for money?
- How has the Cabinet decision about a further £25k investment for all types of community transport been implemented?
- What are the options for community transport being promoted and expanded to cover for traditional scheduled bus services that are in decline?
- How can we jointly develop a more sustainable community led transport approach to better meet the needs of Dorset's residents?
- What role does community transport have in supporting Dorset's economy and the health, quality of life and safety of people in Dorset?
- What are the potential barriers to delivery of a successful community transport scheme and how can these barriers be overcome so that Council support for community led initiatives is maximised?