

Project Plan – Community Transport Hub and Car Scheme Federation

Whilst the Bucks Accessibility Partnership has largely faded there is significant demand for advice and support to local groups and organisations on transport matters. In particular over the last year there has been increased demand for assistance and support in establishing community led solutions to transport needs. Pressure for such an approach is both a reflection of the national Big Society agenda and the associated drive to make public sector expenditure reductions, and a genuine response to local need (particularly in light of actual and potential reductions in rural bus services).

A number of the Local Area Forums have recognised this need and provided additional funding, to be used by 31 March 2011, to promote community car schemes in up to 20 local areas. Whilst the focus at the moment is on community car schemes, it is anticipated that other community solutions (such as community bus schemes along the lines of the Risborough Community Bus) will also be needed. Our experience is that such initiatives can deliver significant benefits but frequently have a longer gestation period due to their larger funding and operational requirements.

In light of this two objectives for the immediate future development of community and rural transport within Buckinghamshire are apparent:

- Community Transport Hub
- County-wide federation of community car schemes

Funding to develop both of these projects has been secured and an initial project plan for their implementation is shown below.

Project 1: Community Transport Hub

Not everyone has access to a traditional bus service and are seeking a more needs-led alternative. There are at least 20 community car schemes in Buckinghamshire, who already offer an outstanding service to people from rural areas, but they are often under resourced and leave their advertising to word of mouth. In the past year, Community impact Bucks have taken an increased number of enquiries from members of the public looking for transport solutions, often to visit relatives in hospital or to attend day centres. This has demonstrated that people are often confused about what services may be able to help them, and how to access those services. Our proposal is to pilot a community transport hub, which would act as a “one stop shop” for information, advice and guidance on community transport services, where customers can call one centralised number and find out which service best meets their needs. There would also be the option of booking trips through this centralised number if the client wishes

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to do so and the individual community transport provider has highlighted a need for help with bookings and administration. In addition to this, the hub would support those individual services, by reviewing policies, procedures and practices; providing business development support and financial healthchecks and identifying potential tender opportunities. Key aims are:

- a. Work with Dial-A-Ride to review procedures and practices with a view to improving customer service through implementing a central co-ordinating hub
- b. Support the local Dial-A-Ride in improving accessibility to a range of other community transport providers
- c. Provide business development support (eg financial healthchecks, identification of tender opportunities, advice on financial costing) to the local Dial-A-Ride as necessary
- d. Establish links with local community transport providers to develop joint working and awareness.

The hub would initially be piloted in the Chiltern area, and operated with Chiltern Dial A Ride, who are already well established as valued community transport provider with booking systems, telephone staff and governance. There is a possibility of extending the pilot to the Wycombe and South Bucks areas during the year, although this is subject to further discussion and agreement by the relevant parties. The work will begin on 1 April, with a view to “go live” by 31 August 2011:

| Task | Start Date | Completion Date | Priority |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Recruit Coordinator | 01-Apr | 30-Apr | High |
| Recruit Volunteers for research projects | 01-Apr | 30-Apr | High |
| Visit to Wiltshire | 01-Apr | 30-Apr | Medium |
| Needs Assessment Survey- public | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |

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|--|--------|---------|--------|
| Needs Assessment Survey- community transport providers | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |
| Collect Data on Car Schemes and other transport options/Gap analysis | 01-May | 31-May | High |
| Set up policies and procedures/terms and conditions | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |
| Set up booking system | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |
| Research and purchase journey planning software | 01-Apr | 30-Jun | High |
| Organise seminar/meeting of existing providers | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Toolkit provided to all schemes | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Database of vehicles | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Insurance | 01-Apr | 30-Jun | High |
| Marketing Plan including targeted marketing in areas where gaps have been identified | 01-Jun | 30-Jun | High |
| Income Generation/Business Planning | 01-Jun | 30-Jun | High |
| Recruitment of new volunteers | 01-Jun | ongoing | High |
| Agree fee structure- chargeable services and membership fees | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Database of volunteers | 01-Jun | 31-Jul | High |
| Database of schemes | 01-Jun | 31-Jul | High |
| Website | 01-Aug | 31-Jul | High |

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01-Jun

31-Aug

High

Project 2: County Wide federation of community car schemes

Since October 2010, Community Impact Bucks has been involved with the set up of community car schemes in 20 LAF areas and the support of existing community transport providers. On speaking to existing schemes it has become evident that many are under resourced, with a dwindling number of volunteer drivers, limited financial back up and there is a great disparity in terms of policies, procedures and administration. In addition to this, in some villages there are as many as five car schemes, all operating independently of each other despite offering a very similar services and working with the same client groups. This can cause confusion among potential passengers, and also results in wasted resources, when schemes could be working together, sharing volunteers and vehicles. Potential coordinators and volunteer drivers are often uncertain about legal requirements regarding CRB checks, public liability insurance, vehicle insurance, and have asked for help with these issues. To this end we have published a toolkit for all schemes across the county, and offer telephone support and advice for new and existing schemes. Our proposal is to establish a federation of car schemes across Buckinghamshire, to give the opportunity to share resources, have expert support and the opportunity to join a county wide public liability insurance policy. This service would be given in return for a small annual membership fee.

There are two aspects of work, which will cover:

1. Establish a county wide federation of community car schemes, building on best practice from elsewhere in the country.
 - a. Federation to provide marketing, publicity and promotional support
 - b. Federation to seek group insurance for local community car schemes (subject to financial viability)
 - c. Federation to provide governance and operational information and advice, including model documents (eg reimbursing arrangements, driver agreements, good practice etc) to participating community car schemes
 - d. Federation to assist with recruiting and training volunteers (possibly to include CRB checking)
2. Work with local communities to develop new community led transport schemes, in particular;

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- a. Keeping up to date a community car implementation toolkit
- b. Promoting best practice and ideas from other areas

| Task | Start Date | Completion Date | Priority |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Recruit Volunteers for research projects | 01-Apr | 30-Apr | High |
| Visit to Wiltshire | 01-Apr | 30-Apr | Medium |
| Needs Assessment Survey- community transport providers Gap analysis | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |
| Collect Data on Car Schemes and other transport options | 01-May | 31-May | High |
| Agree governance, terms and conditions etc | 01-Apr | 31-May | High |
| Organise seminar/meeting of existing providers | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Toolkit provided to all schemes | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Database of vehicles | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Public Liability Insurance | 01-Apr | 30-Jun | High |
| Marketing Plan including targeted marketing in areas where gaps have been identified Recruitment of new volunteers | 01-Jun | ongoing | High |
| Agree fee structure- chargeable services and membership fees | 01-May | 30-Jun | Medium |
| Database of volunteers | 01-Jun | 31-Jul | High |
| Database of schemes | 01-Jun | 31-Jul | High |
| Website | 01-Aug | 31-Jul | High |

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Funding Needs 2011/2012

Community Impact has assessed these two areas of activity and estimates that the following funding is required to meet the outcomes set out above.

| | Community Car Schemes | Community Transport Hub |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Salary costs | 11,020 | 7,540 |
| Project Costs | 5,000 | 7,000 |
| Management and Administration | 1,100 | 750 |
| | 17,120 | 15,290 |
| Bucks County Council * | 10,000 | |
| District Contribution (£500 each) | 2,000 | |
| Chiltern District Council * | | 13,000 |
| Community Impact Bucks * | 5,120 | 2,290 |
| | 17,120 | 15,290 |

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* funding agreed