

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 20 June 2023

Community Transport Grants – Continuation of Public Social Partnership

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| Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments | Routine All |
|---|----------------|

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:
- 1.1.1 Approves the award of grants to the following Community Transport Operators:
 - 1.1.1.1 HCL (Handicabs);
 - 1.1.1.2 SEAG;
 - 1.1.1.3 Pilton Equalities Project;
 - 1.1.1.4 Lothian Community Transport Services; and
 - 1.1.1.5 Dove Transport.
 - 1.1.2 Approves the commencement of the grant funding on 1 July 2023 for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further 12-month period, undertaken at the sole discretion of the Council, at a value of £757,028 per year. The value over the grant period is £3.028m as set out in Section 6.

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Executive Director of Place

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Report

Community Transport Grants – Continuation of Public Social Partnership

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report requests the approval for the continuation of grants totalling £757,028 per year. Over the total grant period, the value of the contracts would be £3.028m for the provision to support individuals and groups with mobility impairments.
- 2.2 This report seeks to highlight the impressive work carried out by all the existing Community Transport Operators over the past four years while also seeking a method to sustain and grow this vital sector to meet demand at a time of driver shortages affecting the industry nationally and locally. This will involve a further Business Case to be completed in conjunction with Education, Children and Justice Services.
- 2.3 This grant proposal builds on the Public Social Partnership which has delivered a dynamic and lasting partnership between the Council and the Community Transport (CT) sector in Edinburgh to support the remodelling and development of innovative, integrated and flexible transport solutions, and build the capacity of the CT sector to be able to deliver sustainable cost-effective transport solutions based in communities.

3. Background

- 3.1 In [September 2015](#), Finance and Resources Committee agreed to support the establishment of a Community Transport Public-Social Partnership (PSP). Key early achievements include finalising a Memorandum of Understanding, sharing resources, developing a small-scale new service and improving efficiency.
- 3.2 On [11 October 2018](#), Finance and Resources Committee approved the implementation of a Public Social Partnership with grants to Third Sector organisations for the provision of community and accessible transport based on the service they could deliver.
- 3.3 Community Transport Operators have consistently provided low-cost accessible transport support to Adults, Older People and Children with Additional Support Needs who require intensive levels of support to attend schools and health care

facilities over the past four years. They have been able to react to changing needs (such as providing transport logistics to NHS vaccination centres during COVID and providing transport to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Edinburgh).

- 3.4 The PSP enabled the Council and Partners to test the hypothesis that transport services could be planned and purchased to meet periods of high demand. This has been successful within the realm of Health and Social Care provision.
- 3.5 Demand for shared accessible transport is rising at the same time as private contractors have left the market due to rising costs and inability to retain drivers in the industry.
- 3.6 All Community Transport Operators have efficiently, effectively and flexibly met the requirement of the previously funded grant arrangement and have gone beyond expectations.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The existing grant agreement expired in March 2023. An extension was put in place for three months to explore capacity requirements. The Council now seeks to extend the funding for each individual Community Transport partners.
- 4.2 Collaboration is underway with officers in the public transport team and Community Transport providers to offer responsive registered bus service in the Dumbiedykes and Lady Nairn area of the city to facilitate access to GP practices and local shops. A Business Bulletin update on this was reported to Transport and Environment Committee on [18 May 2023](#) but has yet to be approved. None-the-less, should plans be approved the Community Transport PSP are proactively ready to engage further.
- 4.3 As Health and Social Care services flex in response to demand, the Community Transport Operators have altered the way in which they provide services to fit with the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) demands.
- 4.4 Equally, there is a high demand for individual taxi usage in EHSCP which no longer represents good value or provides quality of service to adults and older people with highly complex needs attending statutory and non-statutory services.
- 4.5 Applying the methodology tested over the past four years will reduce the risk of creating dependency on taxi services and reduce overall costs to EHSCP.
- 4.6 Taking this methodology forward provides the Community Transport Operators with a level of continuity to flex their resources to meet community resilience initiatives to reduce the impact of the cost of living crisis while sustaining existing transport levels and growing in response to national pressures in the Transport Market.
- 4.7 HCL Handicabs are also proposing to bring forward plans to convert some of their Dial-a-Bus service into registered routes enabling older people to full use their over 60's National Entitlement (NEC) Card. Work will begin to scope this exercise in

October 2023 (including community engagement and collaboration with the public transport team).

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to approval by the Finance and Resources Committee, the grant funding arrangements will be awarded for the provision of transport support for individuals and groups with mobility impairments and complex needs.
- 5.2 The Grant Arrangement will commence on 1 July 2023 for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further 12 months, undertaken at the sole discretion of the Council.
- 5.3 Within this grant period the Council will explore opportunities to seek to support demand for high quality transport provision for children with complex needs.
- 5.4 The Grant Manager will be the City-Wide Service Manager – Transport and Travel.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The total value for the grant provision over is £3.028m for the three-year grant duration plus 12-month extension.

| | 2023/2024 | 2024/2025 | 2025/2026 | 2026/2027 |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Dove Transport | £29,000 | £29,800 | £29,800 | £29,800 |
| PEP Transport | £29,800 | £29,800 | £29,800 | £29,800 |
| SEAG Transport | £98,847 | £98,847 | £98,847 | £98,847 |
| LCTS | £150,591 | £150,591 | £150,591 | £150,591 |
| HcL Handicabs (DAR) | £106,555 | £106,555 | £106,555 | £106,555 |
| HcL Handicabs (DAB) | £341,435 | £341,435 | £341,435 | £341,435 |
| Total | £757,028 | £757,028 | £757,028 | £757,028 |

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The provision of Voluntary Sector Community Transport Provision supports our City Mobility Plan and the wider ethos of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.
- 7.2 Coproduction with current service users is routinely carried out at annual general meetings, board meetings and open events organised by EVOC and the Voluntary Sector Community Transport providers.
- 7.3 Sustainability and the environment were key elements of the Grant Award as the passenger's transport inside the city boundaries.
- 7.4 The successful partnership with the voluntary sector community transport providers are required to meet the minimum emissions standards as specified by the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and be committed to progressively being more sustainable e.g. by converting to electric vehicles by 2030. Community Transport Partners are aware of the LEZ boundaries, standards and penalty charges for not adhering. All Community Transport providers have demonstrated good progress in terms of changing their fleet to electric vehicles and otherwise minimising or mitigating their environmental impact, for example by reducing paper invoices and using sustainable energy sources to provide power at offices.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [2030 Climate Strategy and Implementation Plan](#).
- 8.2 [Council Emissions Reduction Plan](#).
- 8.3 Community Transport – Public Social Partnership arrangements – Finance and Resources Committee, [17 March 2016](#).
- 8.4 Community Transport, Interim Funding Arrangements – Finance and Resources Committee, [26 November 2015](#).
- 8.5 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 update – City of Edinburgh Council, [10 December 2015](#).
- 8.6 Community Transport – Development of a Public Social Partnership – Finance and Resources Committee, [24 September 2015](#).
- 8.7 The Cooperative Capital Framework year two progress report – City of Edinburgh Council, [20 November 2014](#).
- 8.8 Review of Council Grants to Third Parties 2013/2014 – Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee, [11 February 2014](#).

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.