



AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

Hengrove and Stockwood Neighbourhood Partnership 24th January 2012

Report of: Pete Woodhouse, Passenger Transport Manager, BCC

Title: Section 106 report – Community Transport to South Bristol Hospital

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Neighbourhood Committee decides:

1. To proceed with the option to provide the available funding to 2 South Bristol based Community Transport organisations for the provision of Community Transport services for all of South Bristol to the new hospital.

Background

1. Section 106 (s106) is part of planning legislation. It can require developers to pay money to the council to provide measures to mitigate the impact of their development.
2. Due to the major capital developments of the South Bristol Hospital, South Bristol Skills Academy and the Leisure Centre at Hengrove Park, a substantial amount of s.106 money was negotiated with the developers.
3. Around £144,000 was negotiated for Community Transport provision to the South Bristol Hospital. This entire sum has been devolved to the Neighbourhood Partnership.
4. Other (non devolved) s106 funding for Public Transport provision to the development site has been committed to the extension of public

transport services to the site. This money is being held by the council's Passenger Transport Team and the provision of services is being reviewed on an annual basis.

Community Transport in South Bristol

5. Existing Community Transport (CT) in South Bristol is provided by 2 locally based organisations, the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership CATT Bus Service (serving the Dundry View area) and the Mede Centre in Knowle. These organisations are funded by Bristol City Council to provide CT to their members in these areas.
6. CT is also provided by Bristol Dial-a-Ride (BDAR), on a citywide 'first come first served basis'. This does not therefore naturally fit with dedicated provision to a single destination. Citywide CT provision is also available from Bristol Community Transport (BCT). This service is predominantly minibus hire to community groups.
7. The Council has recently commenced a project for the Commissioning of CT services. This will analyse the need for CT services across the city, and will determine how CT can be provided in an equitable way in the future. This project is due to run for 18-24 months, so any proposal must include the flexibility to continue into any potential new arrangements.

Aspirations of South Bristol PCT

8. In discussions with the Hospital Trust, their priorities are to ensure that their patient catchment area is well served by Public Transport. Where this is not provided, and where there are people who cannot access conventional Public Transport, they expect CT to meet the travel demands. The hospital catchment area covers the whole of South Bristol, so it is imperative that the provision is available to all South Bristol residents with the specific need.

Options for the s106 devolved budget

9. One option is to use the budget to establish a new CT provider dedicated to serving the development. Whilst this option would provide the required focus, CT groups are very much developed with the community over a period of time, to meet a wide variety of travel needs. This includes the development of local volunteers for driving and other requirements. It would be unlikely that any CT group formed with one specific purpose will be able to generate the long term sustainability required to continue operation. To add to this, in the context of the CT Commissioning project mentioned above, it is unlikely that the Council would be able to support the management and development of an increasing number of individual CT groups.

10. Given the potential resources at their disposal a second option would be to contract CT services from a local bus operator. However, as an entirely commercial operation, that wouldn't easily lend itself to altering to meet demand, this might not provide the best value solution. They are also not best placed to work with communities on developing services.
11. The third option is to contract an existing CT provider. These organisations already have the back office established to be able to expand their services and provide the longer term basis for development. Their use of volunteers and the ability to modify routes to maximise vehicle usage make them best placed to get the most for the money available. As mentioned above, there are a number of CT groups in Bristol to consider. The South Bristol based organisations would be able to provide a local focus, and they could work together to be able to maximise value from the funding. Their existing membership all reside within the catchment for the hospital itself, and they would no doubt have demand for journeys to the hospital in any case.
12. £144,000 of s106 money has been devolved to the Neighbourhood Partnership, and the primary use for this money must be CT for the new hospital. In terms of CT provision, this sum of money is not sufficient to support a medium term operation of a CT provider. As such, to get the best value for money, it is advisable to use the money to enhance an existing operation(s).

Recommendation

13. That the Council enters into agreements with the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership and the Mede Centre respectively to provide services to South Bristol Hospital. That these agreements secure a guarantee of services for at least 3 years, and that these services will be available to all residents of South Bristol.
14. Due to the CT commissioning project, that the funding be spent on vehicles so that they can be reallocated (if required) following the completion of the project, and so a continuation of the service to the hospital can be guaranteed as per the demand. This could provide 1 vehicle to each organisation, who would combine to guarantee a service for 5 days a week.