

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Place Scrutiny Commission

11 February 2016

Report of: Service Director for Transport

Title: Community Transport

Ward: City Wide

Officer Presenting Report: *Ed Plowden*

Contact Telephone Number: x36568

RECOMMENDATION

To consider and comment on the contents of the report.

Summary

To provide scrutiny with details on the current Community Transport provision and the upcoming changes.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The role of Community Transport and the current provision in Bristol
- The development of a Draft Community Transport Commissioning Strategy
- The proposal to integrate Community Transport funding with the new strategic, cross-Council approach to grant funding the Voluntary and Community sector

Policy

1. Under the Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) we aim to maintain, diversify and expand Community Transport in the West of England. We aim to do this by supporting the JLTP3 accessibility objectives; linking with other forms of public transport; optimising Community Transport operations; encouraging social enterprises and providing marketing, publicity and information.

Consultation

2. Internal

Grants and Investments team

3. External

Not Applicable

Context

Background:

1. Transport and accessibility problems are likely to have more relevance for some people and places than for others. Transport may not go where people want it to, or when, or it may be physically difficult for the elderly or disabled to use. Community Transport provides reliable, cost-effective and accessible minibuses to community groups and individuals in Bristol, so they have access to social, cultural, leisure, faith-based and healthy living activities.
2. Community Transport is an integral part of the overall transport provision in the city. It is there to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society, those that are unable to use conventional public transport, are able to travel around.
3. In December 2014 Cabinet gave its agreement to the development of a strategic, cross-Council model of revenue grant funding to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) with clear priorities for the council's grant investment in order to tackle the City's key challenges. Grant funding can only be used for discretionary activities: those things the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide.
4. As part of the new cross-Council model we are proposing to maintain our commitment to grant funding VCS organisations by including the £0.9m p.a. grants budget currently used to fund the current Community Transport providers in the Council's proposed grants prospectus.

Community Transport provision in Bristol:

5. The Council provides grant support to 6 Community Transport providers in the city, and we now benefit from an established market which has arisen from a combination of community needs as well as access to short-term regeneration and European social fund grants for areas of deprivation. The key strengths of the overall Community Transport provision in Bristol are the range of available vehicles; the enthusiasm and goodwill of charity and social enterprise employees and volunteers alike to provide a quality service.

6. These Community Transport providers offer a variety of different types of service and current providers are listed in brackets after each category:
- Demand responsive door to door individual transport, this is generally known as 'ring-and-ride' or 'dial-a-ride'. This type of service is traditionally from the home location to the required destination. (Social Access)
 - Community Bus Services, these are services with varying levels of diversion from their route to make door-to-door collections. Many provide different routes on different days of the week to maximise the use of the vehicles allocated to the service. (Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership, Lawrence Weston Community Transport, Knowle West Children's Centre, Bristol Community Transport)
 - Hire of accessible minibuses for voluntary and community group users, all of the providers operating community bus services hire out their vehicles for group use. (Bristol Community Transport)
 - Hire of individual mobility equipment. This is currently provided from a unit based in Cabot Circus, and involves the provision of short and long term hire of mobility equipment to anyone with a mobility impairment. (Shopmobility)

Current Funding:

7. Community Transport in Bristol is currently funded through a grant process, with a current budget of £0.9m pa. In 2011/12 Community Transport provided 365,333 passenger journeys. In addition, Community Transport providers also receive a rebate for carriage of Concessionary Travelcard holders, which is estimated at £180k pa. This is a local, discretionary enhancement to the Concessionary Travel scheme and is due to cease at the end of March 2016, following a one year extension to the budget in 2015/16.

Commissioning Strategy 2014:

8. In 2012/13 BCC undertook a review of Community Transport, to inform a new commissioning strategy, through which Community Transport would be delivered into the future. This work was undertaken with the involvement and support of the Community Transport providers, and delivered a commissioning strategy that was consulted upon and thereafter refined during the end of 2013. The intention was to have this strategy endorsed in June 2014 and implemented with new services from April 2015.

9. The strategy highlighted that the key objectives for Community Transport should be based on a series of outcomes which address the needs of users of the CT services. To reflect this, the proposed approach was an outcomes based commissioning process, with the outcomes defined as:
- To increase the ability to maintain independence and live longer in their homes
 - To increase the ability to budget and choose to purchase good value and healthy food and other necessities
 - To reduce feelings of isolation
 - To increase the ability to participate in local community life
 - To improve well-being through increased choice of activities
 - To increase confidence and self esteem
 - To maintain positive social and family relationships
10. As above, the plan was for the strategy to be endorsed in June 2014. However, due to emerging issues across Public Health and Social care agendas, and the Council reorganisation, this endorsement and implementation did not proceed. A further emerging aspiration at the time was to take a new strategic approach to grant funding the Voluntary and Community Sector. It became clear that the aspirations of this strategy were closely aligned to those of the Community Transport strategy and, as a result, the Community Transport Strategy was not pursued in isolation.

New Strategic Approach:

11. This new strategic approach to grant funding is called a Grants Prospectus. The purpose of the Prospectus is to be a clear statement of our intent - a guide to understanding what the Council wants to achieve with its amalgamated grant funding. It will bring together and inform the allocation of grant funding across the Council and ensure that the best collective use is made of these grant monies in order to benefit the people in most need and optimise impacts.
12. A VCS Grants Prospectus Working Group, with members from the VCS and the Council, has worked together to co-design this draft Prospectus to lead the Council's grant investment, and a consultation process is running for 13 weeks to 15th February.
13. The inclusion of the existing Community Transport grants within the scope of the prospectus aims to significantly increase the positive impact of Council investment through a shared focus and by ensuring all our efforts are aligned towards the same intent. Transport is known as a "derived demand", meaning that transport demand is derived from the demand for access to goods and services rather than for its own sake,

so there is every reason why Community Transport based outcomes should align with those of other VCS work.

14. The Prospectus focuses on eight identified factors of disadvantage (called Key Challenges) and these align closely with the outcomes identified for Community Transport (as above).

- Poverty (financial poverty, food poverty, fuel poverty)
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Physical and emotional ill health
- Lifestyle deprivation (not being able to access universal/common services and leisure experiences)
- Low engagement (not participating in the community)
- Physical and social isolation or exclusion
- Individual and structural discrimination
- Crime and violence

New grant process:

15. VCS organisations will be able to apply for grant through a single portal, using standardised proportionate grant processes (co-designed with the sector). This rationalises the resources of both the VCS organisations who will apply for this grant and Council officers.

16. VCS transport organisations will be able to propose how they can use their skills, local knowledge and expertise to support disadvantaged people in the City (individuals as well as geographic communities and communities of interest) who are affected by one or more of the City's key challenges.

17. They will be expected to work in ways that contribute to the Prospectus values with the expectation that this will increase collaboration and engagement with communities. The Prospectus will encourage organisations to place themselves strategically in the communities they serve by collaborating with each other and with other local organisations. This might be through formal collaborations (joint grant applications) or informal arrangements across areas or communities of interest.

18. Appraisal of grant applications will include a consideration of value for money. This will take into account the proposed spend, the benefit to disadvantaged people (organisations will be asked to evidence this through a Theory of Change template), the proportion of direct to indirect costs (overheads) and added value (for example leverage of other funds and volunteer time).

19. The impact measures for the Prospectus have not yet been developed but we expect that organisations will be required to monitor against a

basket of agreed measures or indicators to show how they are working to prevent and reduce disadvantage and that these measures will be aligned with the Social Value measures were appropriate.

Consultation Feedback:

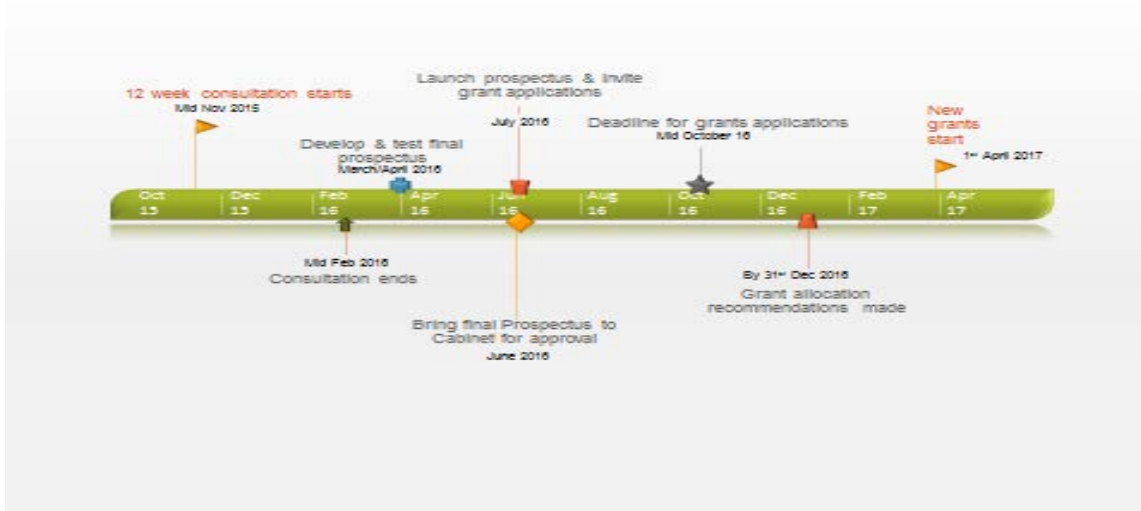
- 20.** Early consultation feedback about the Prospectus indicates that VCS organisations are generally in favour of the approach, particularly the single portal and the focus on disadvantage, but the following concerns or questions have been raised by Community Transport organisations at recent prospectus consultation events:
- Alternative options have been put forward to our proposed combination of two year and four year grants with funding tapers at years 3 and 4.
 - Organisations may need additional resources or capacity if they are to work collaboratively.
 - The removal of concessionary rebate for Community Transport providers may have a significant impact on their sustainability and ability to engage with the prospectus.
 - Collaborative working, including shared protocols about what to do if a scheduled service user is not present, would be welcomed. However there are some concerns about how to work collaboratively where there is also competition.
 - Organisations need clear advice about State Aid.

Timescales:

- 21.** The consultation with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is taking place for 13 weeks until February 15th.

From March-May 2016 we will review, test and finalise the Prospectus. We will seek Cabinet agreement to the final prospectus in June 2016. From July to October 2016 we will launch VCS Grants prospectus and run the first grants application processes. The first Prospectus grants will start in April 2017.

The timeline is shown in the following diagram:



Other Options Considered

22. Other options were considered in the December 2014 Cabinet report on VCS Grants Strategic Approach.

Alignment with other Council objectives

23. The Council is currently developing plans to commission Community Support Services. A Draft Commissioning Strategy was developed and consultation undertaken in October 2015. The outcomes contained within this draft strategy are as follows:

- Live daily life with dignity and feel respected
- Have access to transport to enable independent living
- Have access to education, training and employment, where appropriate
- Maximise wellbeing
- Safe and feel safe
- Enabled to become independent of the need for support services, where appropriate
- Able to make their own decisions while managing risks and responsibilities
- Satisfied with the services they receive

24. Given the crossover of the outcomes described throughout this report, it is intended to explore the opportunities to maximise the benefit of the funding that is available across these work areas. Liaison between the relevant officers is underway and the next meeting is planned to enable feedback from Scrutiny to be considered

Risk Assessment

25. Risks associated with this were considered in the Cabinet report on Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Commissioning presented in December 2014. The current consultation process is seeking to identify comments and concerns of VCS providers including Community Transport.

Public Sector Equality Duties

26a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

26b) During the development of the prospectus model it will be vitally important to have a full and comprehensive EqIA for the development and delivery phases, and for this EqIA to be reviewed regularly.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

N/A

(Legal advice provided by N/A)

Financial

(a) Revenue

N/A

(b) Capital

N/A

(Financial advice provided by - N/A)

Land

N/A

Personnel

N/A

(Personnel advice provided by N/A)

Appendices:

The 2nd December 2014 Cabinet Report on VCS Grants Strategic Approach can be accessed here:

https://www2.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2014/ua/ua000/1202_7.pdf

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None