

WOKING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (BUSTLER SERVICE) – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Woking Community Transport has applied for the sum of £236,480 for the 2018/19 financial year. The purpose of the funding is to provide its valued Dial a Ride service which operates across the Borough and now includes transport for the Group’s members to the main hospitals outside of Woking (St Peters, Ashford and Royal Surrey). In addition the Group will continue to provide transport for residents to Woking Borough’s Centres for the Community and its vehicles will be available for use by community groups, either with a supplied driver or on a self-drive basis (subject to MiDAS training). The operations aim to provide the drivers and vehicles necessary to meet requirements. In response to increasing membership and demand for Dial a Ride there are times when it operates with more than ten vehicles in the Borough and it will aim to continue to do as required.

Woking Community Transport has significantly increased the work undertaken for Surrey County Council along with its hospital related work over the past year, which has enabled the Group to reduce its funding request to Woking Borough Council for 2018/19 by circa £17,000. However the Group has advised that there is uncertainty over the future levels of the grant received from Surrey County Council (£42,500 in 2017/18). If the grant was to end, it would be difficult to continue to provide the service for the Council at the lower level of grant being requested in this application.

Woking Community Transport provides an accessible transport service of which Woking Borough can be proud and also has demonstrated its ability to provide a high level of service in other parts of Surrey. It is a well regarded voluntary organisation with a high profile inside and outside of Woking, demonstrating high levels of customer satisfaction. The maintenance of the existing service is essential for those with mobility difficulties enabling them to maintain independence and access services and outlets of their choice.

It is proposed that the application from the Group for its Bustler service is approved at the reduced level of £236,480, a reduction of around £17,000 from the previous year.

Recommendations

Reasons for Decision	To support the Dial-A-Ride service across the Borough of Woking.
Legal Authority	S106 Transport Act 1985
The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That a grant of £236,480 be awarded towards the core costs of the existing Borough-wide Dial-A-Ride service.
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit audited accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise</p>

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	<p>the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on all literature and leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with details of the costs incurred and monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in March. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p>Venue Hire. Woking Borough Council has a duty to ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This duty extends to organisations that work with the local authority so this includes recipients of any grants from Woking Borough Council. If you hire out your venue/s you should ensure you have good processes in place for record keeping and checking if they are an appropriate group to be making the hire arrangements. The following are some of what should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic details should be recorded to include speakers address, mobile phone number & organisation details. • Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed & is their organisation bona fide? Are they known to you? • Is the speaker from the area? Are they UK citizens or from overseas & will they travel specifically for this event? • Consider checks on the internet to confirm the status of speaker to include website, YouTube or social media sites. • How many people are likely to attend (check previous or similar events either locally or online).
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users in the past quarter.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised over the last quarter.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	<p>The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2018/19 does not imply that a similar application in 2019/20 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2018/19 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2019/20 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2019. All applicants are strongly recommended to</p>

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pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2018/19 Application Form.

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Date Published:

6 December 2017

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Woking Community Transport was founded in 1991 and is a registered society under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 regulated by the FCA. It is accepted by HMRC as having exempt charitable status. The Group provides accessible door to door transport to those who would otherwise be socially excluded because of poverty, disability or age.</p> <p>It is based in Woking and relies upon grants from WBC and SCC to provide Dial A Ride, Centre and Group transport services. Additionally, under contract, the Group provides services to SCC (Home to School and Adult & Community Care) and is working with the NHS and Ambulance trusts in respect of Hospital related non-emergency patient transport. It also manages the Town Centre Buggy.</p>
1.2 Employees	<p>71. 53 of the staff are employed as drivers, 3 of whom are full time and 37 part time (10 - 30 hours per week). 13 drivers are 'zero hours' or casual.</p> <p>There are 14 office based members of staff (management, admin, operations), 8 of whom are full time (37.5 hours per week) and 6 part time (hours variable).</p> <p>In addition there are 2 passenger escorts, both working part time (15 - 22.5 hours per week).</p>
1.3 Volunteers	<p>2. The volunteers work as drivers for Group Transport and occasionally Centre Services.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>The users of the service are also stated to be Members.</p>
1.5 Members	<p>2,609, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 812 male 1,797 female 2,609 disabled 98 ethnic minority 2,609 resident in Woking 3 aged 0-5 2 aged 5-10 10 aged 11-18 294 aged 19-65 2,300 aged 65+ <p>Dial a Ride fares range from £3.40 to £3.80 per single journey dependent upon the distance travelled. Hospital trips range from £8 to £12 per single journey. WBC Centres are charged at £5.00 return. The Town Centre Buggy is provided free of charge. All registered users have reduced mobility which prevents them from using</p>

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	mainstream bus services, making it difficult to access facilities in the community.																																												
1.6 Sum Requested	£236,480 (Revenue)																																												
1.7 Project	<p>Woking Community Transport will continue to provide its valued dial a ride service which operates across the Borough, including transport for members to the main hospitals outside of Woking (St Peters, Ashford and Royal Surrey). In addition it will continue to provide transport for residents to the Woking Borough Centres for the Community and its vehicles will also be available for use by community groups either with a supplied driver or on a self-drive basis (subject to MIDAS training).</p> <p>The Group's aim is to continue to provide the vehicles and drivers necessary to meet increasing requirements where there are times it has been necessary to operate more than 10 vehicles in the Borough.</p>																																												
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Staffing costs</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Operations salaries (incl oncosts)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£221,106</td> </tr> <tr> <td>other direct staff costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,700</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£223,806</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Vehicles</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£19,298</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fuel</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£24,927</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other vehicle costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4,679</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£9,217</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Use of WCT vehicles</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£18,144</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£76,265</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Overheads</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admin</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£51,978</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Premises & other overheads</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£29,350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£81,328</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL COSTS</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£381,399</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Less income</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surrey County Council</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£37,188</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BSOG</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£8,476</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fares</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£99,255</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£144,919</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DEFICIT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">-£236,480</td> </tr> </table> <p>The cost breakdown provides a dial-a-ride service across all of Woking Borough including extensions to St. Peters, Ashford, and Royal Surrey hospitals, in addition to Woking Borough Council centres of the community.</p> <p>In the last year or so Woking Community Transport has increased significantly the work undertaken for Surrey County Council and also hospital related work. It has stated that such expansion enables the</p>	<u>Staffing costs</u>		Operations salaries (incl oncosts)	£221,106	other direct staff costs	£2,700	Total	£223,806	<u>Vehicles</u>		Maintenance	£19,298	Fuel	£24,927	Other vehicle costs	£4,679	Insurance	£9,217	Use of WCT vehicles	£18,144	Total	£76,265	<u>Overheads</u>		Admin	£51,978	Premises & other overheads	£29,350	Total	£81,328	TOTAL COSTS	£381,399	<u>Less income</u>		Surrey County Council	£37,188	BSOG	£8,476	Fares	£99,255	Total	£144,919	DEFICIT	-£236,480
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	<p>Group to limit the cost of the service provided to Woking Borough as it is better able to spread its overheads, and as a result it is able to request a lower grant for the coming year of £236,480, a reduction of around £17,000 on last year.</p>
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>Woking Community Transport provides an essential service for those of any age with reduced mobility who are unable to use ordinary public transport. Dial A Ride services enable people to travel at affordable fares from their home to any other place in the Borough and also to St Peters, Ashford and Royal Surrey hospitals.</p> <p>The Centre service enables users of the Centres to travel at fares determined by WBC. Carers and assistance dogs travel free. Its services are designed to promote health and wellbeing, independence and social inclusion.</p> <p>In 2016/17 the Group undertook approximately 40,000 passenger journeys. Under the vehicle replacement programme its fleet is regularly refreshed with vehicles conforming to current standards.</p> <p>Additionally, it continues to improve technology systems providing automated schedule communication and vehicle management information, including tracking, thus enabling it to maximise its fleet efficiencies.</p> <p>As a result Woking users are able to enjoy vehicles which are up to date, quiet and fuel efficient. It also offers enhanced Dial A Ride, Group Transport, advice and support on transport related matters and MIDAS training for drivers to other voluntary groups in the Borough, schools and other educational establishments.</p>

2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £153,000 in the bank. The reserves are stated to provide a working balance and vehicle replacements as per the Group's reserves policy.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for the Bustler service during 2018/19 which shows an anticipated income of £144,919 against an anticipated expenditure of £381,399, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £236,480, representing the grant applied for from the Council.</p> <p>Anticipated income and expenditure are set out in paragraph 1.8 – cost breakdown.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2016/17 which show an income of £1,577,582 (£1,357,089 in 2015/16) against expenditure of £1,512,883 (£1,430,436 in 2015/16), resulting in an operating surplus of £64,699 (an operating deficit of £73,347 in 2015/16). The sum of £415,383 was carried forward at the end of the 2016/17 year.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2017/18 – £253,400 2016/17 – £253,400 towards the Dial-A-Ride and Centre Service (in addition to funding of £26,575 allocated from the Personalisation Partnership Prevention Fund) 2015/16 – £253,400 towards the Dial-A-Ride and Centre Service (in</p>

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	<p>addition to funding of £26,575 allocated from the Personalisation Partnership Prevention Fund)</p> <p>2014/15 – £253,400 towards the Dial-A-Ride and Centre Service (in addition to funding of £26,575 allocated from the Personalisation Partnership Prevention Fund)</p> <p>2013/14 – £279,975 towards the Dial-A-Ride and Centre Service</p>
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3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously <p>* purchase of new accessible minibus</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes *</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Councillor D Hughes and Councillor J Kingsbury</u> (Member Nominees)</p> <p>This service has again continued to grow in the past year with an increased number of members using the Dial a Ride and residents using the services. Woking Community Transport (WCT) are required to replace their vehicles every eight years and they are fully depreciated over this period. They rely on the grant from WBC to replace these vehicles on a rolling cycle in an environment where the cost of running the service continues to grow. However the company has been successful in growing other elements of their service with contracts to SCC for example, which means that rather than requesting an increased grant this year, they have requested less than last year.</p> <p>The Bustler services provide essential support to residents who use the community day centres around Woking. The feedback from residents using these services is excellent. The drivers are professional and themselves provide a valuable continuity to those who require help, they go above and beyond. The Bustler service has grown in the demand for hospital visits to our three secondary care providers, but also more locally to the local Bedser hub which has been a great success. The Bustler service now provides three vehicles to support this service. Feedback from residents indicates how this compares very favourably against other hospital transport means, where they are often picked up hours early for an appointment</p>	

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	<p>and left late to collect. The Bustler service is prompt and reliable, pick up and collect times are efficiently managed though the central control permitting an enhanced experience for patients.</p> <p><u>Officer Comment</u></p> <p>I would be supportive of this application not least because it is evident that the identified need to provide a service to St Peter's, Ashford, Royal Surrey and other healthcare facilities has now been proven, and that as a consequence WCT have now managed to incorporate such service extension into their core service (as a result of securing other contracts) which is welcomed. WCT's increased flexibility to maximise the use of the buses for other community groups is also positively noted.</p> <p>Additionally, WCT have continued to demonstrate an increasingly willingness to actively get involved in wider wellbeing partnership working to support the delivery of the Borough's Health and Wellbeing Plan, which is particularly welcomed.</p>
3.3 Assessment	<p>Woking Community Transport (WCT) provides accessible door-to-door transport to those who would otherwise be socially excluded due to poverty, disability or age. The service is based in Woking and relies on grants from Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council in order to provide dial-a-ride, hospital, community centre and group hire services. In 2016/17 around 40,000 passenger journeys were undertaken.</p> <p>The Group is applying for a revenue grant at a reduced level of £236,480 over the next three years to provide its valued Dial a Ride service operating across the Borough, including transport for members to the main hospitals outside of Woking (St Peters, Ashford and Royal Surrey). In addition it will continue to provide transport for residents to the Centres for the Community in Woking.</p> <p>Since Woking Community Transport began, the organisation has sought new contracts with other organisations thereby spreading overheads and continues to do so. This enables the provision of service improvements for Woking residents whilst minimising the costs to Woking Borough Council. It has continued to pursue opportunities to expand its activities by tendering for additional contracts from other organisations, in particular Surrey County Council, Surrey Choices and NHS Surrey. Evidence of the success of this approach is provided by the winning of eight additional contracts in February 2017 year, alongside its continued ability to continue to provide services to the hospitals outside of Woking Borough despite grant reductions following the termination of the PPPF budget. It aims to continue to pursue this strategy to minimise the cost of the service provided to Woking Borough Council.</p> <p>The Group continues to provide Home to School and Adult and Community Care services for Surrey County Council. Additionally it now provides non emergency patient transport services for the NHS through sub-contracts with South Central Ambulance Service and separately with Frimley Park Hospital. It continually tries to improve its financial position by attracting new contracts, improving margins on existing agreements and also seeking sponsorship donations.</p>

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As Woking Community Transport has significantly increased the work undertaken for Surrey County Council along with its hospital related work over the past year, it has enabled the Group to reduce its funding request to Woking Borough Council for 2018/19 by circa £17,000. However the Group has advised that there is uncertainty over the future levels of the grant received from Surrey County Council (£42,500 in 2017/18). If the grant was to end, it would be difficult to continue to provide the service for the Council at the lower level of grant being requested in this application.

Within its grant application, the Group points to the 2011 Census results which indicate that:

- the population aged over 65 in Woking has increased by 13.7% since 2001
- the equivalent percentage for the over 85's is 27.8%
- 13.0% of people in Woking suffer from long term illness or disability which limits their day to day activities.

These trends are expected to continue and as the Group's users are principally drawn from these groups, the number of people to whom the service is relevant will continue to grow. For many users, the services are essential in enabling them to get out and about in the Borough. Continued marketing, publicity and information sharing are stated to be essential to the successful uptake by the target groups. Users were surveyed in 2014 about the quality and appropriateness of the service provided. The results were positive with an excellent response rate. The highlights have been included within the application, with a further survey due in 2017:

- 92% said they would recommend the service to a friend
- 43% said that if the service did not exist, they would have to stay at home
- 69% said that the service encourages them to get out and about.

Woking Community Transport provides an accessible transport service of which Woking Borough can be proud and also has demonstrated its ability to provide a high level of service in other parts of Surrey. It is a well regarded voluntary organisation with a high profile inside and outside of Woking, demonstrating high levels of customer satisfaction. The maintenance of the existing service is essential for those with mobility difficulties enabling them to maintain independence and access services and outlets of their choice.

It is proposed that the application from the Group for its Bustler service is approved at the reduced level of £236,480, a reduction of around £17,000 from the previous year.

REPORT ENDS