

WOKING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (TOWN CENTRE BUGGY) – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Woking Community Transport has applied to extend its revenue funding of £18,000 in 2018/19 towards the continuation of the service provided by the Town Centre Buggy which is much valued by its disabled or elderly users. The Group highlights that the ongoing expansion of the Town Centre, along with changing demographics, will increase the demands on the buggy as the number of passengers and distance covered will also rise. The new buggy vehicle was introduced in December 2015, replacing the previous vehicle which was 17 years old.

The maintenance of the existing Town Centre Buggy service is essential for those with mobility difficulties enabling them to maintain independence and access the services and outlets that they require in the town centre. Alongside the Dial a Ride service, the Town Centre Buggy provides an integrated channel whereby Dial a Ride users arriving in the Town Centre can be met by the Buggy for onward transport to their destination.

It is expected that over 3,000 individual passenger journeys would be made in the town centre using the Buggy in the current year, a reduction on the previous year due to some disruption of the service relating to the ongoing Town Centre development. The users vary greatly in age, ethnicity and disability but all have significant mobility problems and welcome the help they receive in accessing the town centre and its facilities. For many it enables them to shop and bank independently as well as accessing other amenities in the Town Centre.

The budget submitted for the operation of the Town Centre Buggy during 2018/19 sets out an anticipated deficit of circa £2,000. The Group notes that the deficit is normally addressed through support from the provision of other services (which are not grant funded) and, if possible, sporadic sponsorship received from other organisations.

It is proposed that the application from Woking Community Transport for its Buggy service is approved on the same basis for 2018/19 as the previous year, with revenue support of £18,000.

Recommendations

Reasons for Decision	To enable Woking Community Transport to continue to provide the Town Centre Buggy service in Woking.
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Legal Authority	S106 Transport Act 1985
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The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That a grant of £18,000 be awarded to assist towards the costs of the Town Centre Buggy service operated by Woking Community Transport.
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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>
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	<p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise 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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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.</p> <p>The Group provides accessible door to door transport to those who would otherwise be socially excluded because of poverty, disability or age. 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 return. The Town Centre Buggy is provided free of charge. All registered users have reduced mobility which prevents them from using mainstream bus services, making it difficult to access facilities in the community.</p>

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1.6 Sum Requested	£18,000 (Revenue)																				
1.7 Project	<p>With the demands of changing demographics and the extensive changes to the shopping area in the Town Centre that are currently in hand, Woking Community Transport expects that the demands on the new buggy in terms of the numbers of passengers and distances covered will increase. It is therefore requesting to extend its existing grant of £18,000 as a substantial contribution to cover the revenue costs of providing the service (after deducting expected fundraising).</p> <p>The Town Centre Buggy also provides an integrated service whereby Dial a Ride users arriving in the town centre can be met by the buggy for onward transport to their destination.</p>																				
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>Town Centre Buggy Operational Costs 2018/19 (Revenue only)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Drivers</u> (25 hours per week)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>58 weeks to cover leave and sickness (includes supervision, training etc)</td> <td align="right">£14,848</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Vehicle costs</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service contract</td> <td align="right">£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communications (phone, radio)</td> <td align="right">£200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other maintenance</td> <td align="right">£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance</td> <td align="right">£1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publicity etc</td> <td align="right">£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management</td> <td align="right">£3,711</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL COSTS OF SERVICE</td> <td align="right">£20,109</td> </tr> </table> <p>The operational costs are set out for the provision of a buggy service in the pedestrianised area of the Town Centre.</p>	<u>Drivers</u> (25 hours per week)		58 weeks to cover leave and sickness (includes supervision, training etc)	£14,848	<u>Vehicle costs</u>		Service contract	£0	Communications (phone, radio)	£200	Other maintenance	£250	Insurance	£1,000	Publicity etc	£100	Management	£3,711	TOTAL COSTS OF SERVICE	£20,109
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1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Town Centre Buggy carried approximately 3,000 passengers last year. This number is presently a reduction on last year's figures but this is explained by the significant disruption created by the ongoing remodelling of the Town Centre. On a number of occasions the Buggy was prohibited from running due to the nature of some of the building works and the location of the vehicle's garage. As such, Woking Community Transport expects its usage figures to increase moving forward.</p> <p>Users vary greatly in age, ethnicity and disability but all have significantly reduced mobility and welcome the help they receive in accessing the Town Centre and its facilities. For many, it enables them to shop and bank independently as well as accessing other amenities in the town centre. Population trends, along with the Bustler's increasing membership, means that the need for the service is likely to increase.</p>																				

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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 Town Centre Buggy during 2018/19 which shows an anticipated income of £18,000 against an anticipated expenditure of £20,109, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £2,109.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Woking Borough Council Grant (£18,000). Anticipated expenditure is set out in paragraph 1.8 – cost breakdown.</p> <p>Woking Community Transport has reported that the deficit is normally addressed through support from the provision of other services (which are not grant funded) and sporadic sponsorship received from other organisations.</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 – £18,000</p> <p>2016/17 – £18,000</p> <p>2015/16 – £18,000 revenue plus £10,000 capital towards replacement buggy</p> <p>2014/15 – £18,000</p> <p>2013/14 – £18,000</p> <p>At its meeting on 15 December 2011, the Executive agreed to provide three year fixed funding for the Town Centre Buggy at an increased level of £18,000 per annum (previously £9,025) due to the cessation of financial support by Friends of the Elderly from October 2011.</p> <p>In addition, through the Council a contribution of £10,000 had been negotiated from Wolsey Place Shopping Centre for Woking shopMobility. It was therefore agreed to reduce the Council’s contribution to shopMobility by a similar amount and use the money saved to increase the level of support for the Town Centre Buggy, with a view to securing the service for the years ahead. A report setting out the funding request from Woking shopMobility occurs elsewhere on the agenda and the funding from Woking Shopping is included in the budget submitted by that Group for the forthcoming year.</p> <p>At its meeting in December 2014, the Executive agreed that funding of £10,000 be awarded towards a replacement buggy, as the existing vehicle was 17 years old. The new buggy was introduced from December 2015. Over the past few years, the revenue awarded each year has been continued at the level of £18,000.</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>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Councillor D Hughes and Councillor J Kingsbury (Members Nominees)</u></p> <p>This provides a free service for residents in our town centre enabling those with limited mobility to move from shop to shop. The buggy can be contacted by users and residents who would otherwise be very restricted in their ability to visit the range of facilities within our pedestrian centre. This service is valued by residents and it is noted as an asset to our town which is not present in other towns.</p> <p>Woking Community Transport (WCT) are ideally positioned to provide this service. The dial a ride service collects residents from all around Woking to take them into town. They then can coordinate with the buggy for the drop off of residents with limited mobility to be directly collected by the Buggy.</p> <p>The planned expansion of the town centre and the changing demographics indicate that increasing usage and demand of this service is likely. We support this request for a grant from the Council, WCT receive no reimbursement from users for the service and indeed the service is supplemented by support from WCT itself.</p> <p><u>Officer Comment</u></p> <p>I am supportive of this application in terms of the on-going revenue funding especially since the Council invested in the replacement of the Buggy Vehicle last financial year. The service which dovetails well with the Dial-A-Ride service provides a unique offer for the Town Centre which sets it apart from other retail offerings.</p> <p>Further to last years comments, I am pleased to note that increased promotional work has taken place, and that WCT are taking up the opportunities to promote their services through the Woking Wellbeing network.</p>	
3.3 Assessment	<p>The Buggy Service was first introduced in 1994 (the first in the UK), operates in the area of Woking Town Centre and provides a free</p>	

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service to pedestrians in Woking Town Centre who have a mobility difficulty. The Buggy is operated in the pedestrianised areas of the Town Centre each weekday between 9.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. The Buggy is not used on Saturdays because of the number of people in the Town Centre. No charge is made to users of the service.

Woking Community Transport has submitted an application to continue its revenue funding of £18,000 per annum during the 2018/19 financial year. The Group highlights that the planned future expansion of the town centre, along with changing demographics, will increase the demands on the new buggy as the number of passengers and distance covered will also rise.

It is expected that over 3,000 individual passenger journeys would be made in the Town Centre using the Buggy in the current year, a reduction on the previous year due to the ongoing Town Centre development. All passenger usage of the Buggy is recorded at the time by the driver and monitored on a regular basis, forming part of the statistical reporting. Any un-met requests are also recorded. Users are surveyed every three years or so and regular forums are held with members, both of which enable the Group to establish that it is succeeding in meeting user requirements.

Alongside the Dial a Ride service, the Town Centre Buggy provides an integrated channel whereby Dial a Ride users arriving in the Town Centre can be met by the Buggy for onward transport to their destination.

The maintenance of the existing Town Centre Buggy service is essential for those with mobility difficulties enabling them to maintain independence and access the services and outlets that they require in the town centre.

The budget submitted for the operation of the Town Centre Buggy during 2018/19 sets out an anticipated deficit of circa £2,000. The Group notes that the deficit is normally addressed through support from the provision of other services (which are not grant funded) and, if possible, sporadic sponsorship received from other organisations.

It is proposed that the application from Woking Community Transport for its Buggy service is approved for 2018/19 on the same basis as the previous year, with revenue support of £18,000.

REPORT ENDS