

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

**Executive Summary**

Woking Community Transport (WCT) has applied for the sum of £205,000 for the coming financial year, a reduction of almost £23,000 in comparison with the amount awarded in the previous 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). The total membership of the Dial-a-Ride service has increased by 174 users over the past year.

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).

WCT continues to invest in environmentally friendly vehicles, including fully electric. It plans to develop a mobile app for customer use, to be used in conjunction with its vehicle tracking system. Funding has been applied for from Surrey County Council towards the purchase of new electric vehicles.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Charity has worked hard to continue the provision of its Dial-a-Ride and Community Centre services, noting that there had been an initial reduction in demand arising from the national lockdown. A free Dial-a-Ride service was introduced during the months of August and September. Increased costs had been incurred for the purchase of PPE, temperature monitoring devices and a machine to deep clean the vehicles. WCT was also called upon under the emergency callout provision, with several vehicles being provided to Surrey County Council for the emergency food delivery service, the delivery of PPE, NHS staff transport and the delivery of NHS electronic devices to care homes. Drivers have been provided for the Woking Meals on Wheels service and the Woking Foodbank has been supported by collecting supplied for supermarkets, amongst numerous ad hoc requests from local agencies.

WCT 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 for the Bustler service is approved at the level of £205,000 for the year ahead.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

**RESOLVE That**, subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process, a grant of £205,000 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the core costs of the existing Borough-wide Dial-a-Ride service.

Reason for Decision

To support the Dial-a-Ride service across the Borough of Woking.

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| Legal Authority         | S106 Transport Act 1985   |
| Confirmation of funding | <p>This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> <p>Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis.</p>  |
| Conditions              | <p><b>Accounts.</b> 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><b>Monitoring Information.</b> 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><b>Publicity.</b> Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on all literature and leaflets produced.</p> <p><b>Payments.</b> 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><b>Payment Period.</b> 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><b>Joint Working.</b> 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. For services provided through the Council's grant, the Group will be accountable to the Council's Home Independence Manager.</p> <p><b>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</b> With the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council will expect the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations will be expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively, may put their Council support at risk.</p> |
| Performance Indicators  | <b>Users.</b> The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users in the   |

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|                | <p>past quarter.</p> <p><b>Publicity.</b> The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised over the last quarter.</p> <p><b>Statement of Use.</b> The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>  |
| Future Support | <p>Due to the impact of Covid-19, the financial pressure on the Council's budgets is higher than ever and is expected to continue in the coming years. 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 2021/22 does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is extremely unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2022/23 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2022. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.</p> |

**The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.**

### Background Papers:

2021/22 Application Form.

### Reporting Person:

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### Date Published:

2 December 2020

## Woking Community Transport (Bustler) – Application For Financial Assistance

| <b>1.0 Summary of Application</b> |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 Status and Aims               | <p>Woking Community Transport (WCT) 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 Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council to provide Dial-a-Ride, Centre and Group transport services. Additionally, under contract, the Group provides services to SCC (Home to School (Send) and Adult &amp; Community Care) and is working with the North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group and the South Central Ambulance Trust in respect of Hospital related non-emergency patient transport.</p> <p>WCT also delivers transport services for Woking Community Hospital, the Bedser Hub and similar Hub services at Ashford and Walton Hospitals, and transport on behalf of Woking Adult Social Services. The Hubs provide proactive and reactive care for older people with frailty and multiple long-term conditions who are registered with a Woking GP. The service is provided by an integrated team of health, mental health and social care staff. It is an innovative, multi-disciplinary model that has received local and national praise for the benefits it has delivered for patients and the local health system overall.</p> <p>The Charity also manages the Town Centre Buggy.</p> |
| 1.2 Employees                     | <p>82. 57 of the staff are employed as drivers, with 14 as Passenger Assistants and 11 as office staff. 12 members of staff are full-time (over 35 hours), 64 are part-time (10-35 hours) and 6 are on casual contracts.</p>  |
| 1.3 Volunteers                    | <p>5. There are two types of volunteer at the Charity:</p> <p>Directors take an active role within the organisation, travelling on vehicles to monitor the service, producing policies, accounts and general governance of the society.</p> <p>Drivers work on group transport to provide reduced cost services to local groups including schools, sports teams, assisted living home groups, local Charities, Centres for the Community (day trips for the elderly or to the Centres for activities) and occasional ad hoc requests from the Borough Council.</p>  |
| 1.4 Clients/Users                 | <p>The users of the service are also stated to be Members.</p>  |
| 1.5 Members                       | <p>3,117, comprising:</p> <p>969 male</p> <p>2,148 female</p> <p>2,309 disabled</p> <p>3,117 resident in Woking</p> <p>11 aged 11-18</p>  |

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|                       | <p>330 aged 19-65<br/>2,776 aged 65+</p> <p>Dial-a-Ride fares range from £3.50 to £3.90 per single journey dependent upon the distance travelled.</p> <p>Hospital trips (Royal Surrey, Ashford, St. Peters) range from £8 to £12 per single journey.</p> <p>WBC Centres are charged at £5.20 return.</p> <p>The Town Centre Buggy is provided to users free of charge.</p>  |
| 1.6 Sum Requested     | £205,000 (Revenue)  |
| 1.7 Project           | <p>WCT 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 continues to invest in environmentally friendly vehicles, including fully electric. It plans to develop a mobile app for customer use, to be used in conjunction with its vehicle tracking system. Over the past financial year it has successfully tested a customer app on some services, with more development required for Dial-a-Ride use.</p> <p>To ensure customer safety, CCTV has been introduced onto many of the vehicles, which records the road ahead and an image of the inside of the vehicle.</p>  |
| 1.8 Cost breakdown:   | <p>The break-even budget is set out at section 2.1. The estimated cost of operating the service in 2021/22 is £205,216, and therefore the grant request is £205,000. This amount equates to a reduction of 10% from the award last year due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WCT's continued expansion of other services provided to Surrey County Council and the NHS, so that the share of overheads allocated to Dial-a-Ride and Woking Centres is further reduced.</li> <li>• The arrival of the first electric vehicles later in 2020 will enable reductions in the cost of providing the service (e.g. fuel and maintenance).</li> </ul> <p>Funding has been applied for from Surrey County Council to purchase new electric vehicles, some of which would be used on services provided for Woking Borough. If successful, the grant from the County Council for Woking Dial-a-Ride (circa £42,000) would be withdrawn, although it is anticipated that there would be compensating savings arising from operating the new electric vehicles.</p> <p>The costings for 2021/22 have been prepared on the basis that a sufficient recovery from Covid-19 has taken place.</p> |
| 1.9 Community Benefit | <p>WCT 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. Carers and assistance dogs travel free.</p>  |

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|                      | <p>The Centre service enables users of the Community Centres to travel at fares determined by the Council. Its services are designed to promote health and wellbeing, independence and social inclusion.</p> <p>In 2019/20 the Group undertook 38,081 passenger journeys including hospital appointments. Under the vehicle replacement programme its fleet is regularly refreshed with vehicles conforming to current standards, ensuring the safest and most environmentally friendly journey as possible.</p> <p>Additionally, it continues to improve its vehicle technologies providing automated schedule communication and detailed vehicle management information, including tracking, through the introduction of its Quartix system. The system maximises fleet efficiencies through the monitoring of driver styles and speeds, resulting in reduced fuel bills and minimisation of its carbon footprint.</p> <p>As a result, Woking users are able to enjoy vehicles which are up to date, quiet and fuel efficient. It also offers a non-subsidised enhanced Dial-a-Ride (taking Members to locations outside of the Borough), Group Transport, advice and support on transport related matters and Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training for drivers to other voluntary groups in the Borough, charities, schools and other educational establishments.</p>   |
| 1.10 Covid-19 Impact | <p>Throughout the pandemic, WCT has continued to provide a Dial-a-Ride and Community Centre service at a reduced level due to an initial reduction in demand resulting from the national lockdown, which led to a lower than normal operating cost. However, during the crisis many of the most vulnerable members of the community have found it extremely difficult to get out. This may have been due to shielding, reduced mobility, or not having the means to travel. The Group recognised the difficulty many of its Dial-a-Ride members would have getting to hospital appointments and shops etc, and introduced a free Dial-a-Ride service to members throughout August and September. It states that it will continue to offer this service free as long as its finances permit.</p> <p>There have also been increased costs for PPE and the purchase of monitoring devices to check staff and customers' temperatures. It has also invested in a machine to deep clean vehicles, with extra costs from the costs of the chemicals used within the machine.</p> <p>In addition to the above, WCT was called upon under the emergency callout provision, and has provided several vehicles to SCC for use on the (7 days a week) emergency food delivery service, which included delivering food boxes to Woking residents. It has provided PPE delivery across Surrey, along with home to school transport for key worker children. Its vehicles were also used on NHS staff transport, clinic transport, transporting people for Covid-19 testing, and for the delivery of NHS electronic devices to care homes.</p> <p>The Group has provided drivers for the Woking Meals on Wheels service, and transported homeless people from the York Road Project to the St Mary's Centre for the Community to undertake project work there. It has supported the Woking Foodbank by collecting supplies from supermarkets, and completed numerous ad hoc requests from WBC, SCC, and the NHS.</p> |

## Woking Community Transport (Bustler) – Application For Financial Assistance

| <b>2.0 Financial Background</b>      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2.1 Budget                           | <p>At the time of the application, the Group held £205,086 in the bank. The sum of £96,000 is reserved for a new electric bus and £70,211 for wages.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2021/22 which shows an anticipated income of £161,049 against an anticipated expenditure of £366,266, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £205,216.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Fares (£114,000) and Surrey County Council (£42,500). Items of expenditure include staffing costs (£239,348), vehicles (£61,097) and overheads (£65,820).</p> |
| 2.2 Accounts                         | <p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2019/20. The Income and Expenditure account shows a surplus for the financial year of £87,755 (£76,726 in 2018/19). The sum of £796,913 was carried forward at the end of the 2019/20 year.</p>  |
| 2.3 Support over the past five years | <p>2020/21 – £227,670<br/>                 2019/20 – £236,480<br/>                 2018/19 – £236,480<br/>                 2017/18 – £253,400<br/>                 2016/17 – £253,400</p>  |

| <b>3.0 Assessment of Application</b>     |  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
|--|--|----------------|-----|----------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------|-----|---------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-------|---------------|-----|--------------|-----|--|-----|
| 3.1 Key Information                      | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Constitution</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Registered Charity</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ VAT Registered</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Equal Opportunities Policy</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Safeguarding Policy</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Reserves Policy</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Quality Mark</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Other funding sources pursued</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Other support by the Council</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes *</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Fundraising</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Two quotes</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px dashed black; padding-right: 10px;">○ Regular monitoring provided previously</td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;">Yes</td> </tr> </table> <p>* In the past WBC has purchased one vehicle each year to support the services, however due to the expected electric vehicles from SCC, this will not be requested this year.</p> | ○ Constitution | Yes | ○ Registered Charity | Yes | ○ VAT Registered | Yes | ○ Equal Opportunities Policy | Yes | ○ Safeguarding Policy | Yes | ○ Reserves Policy | Yes | ○ Quality Mark | Yes | ○ Other funding sources pursued | Yes | ○ Other support by the Council | Yes * | ○ Fundraising | Yes | ○ Two quotes | N/A | ○ Regular monitoring provided previously | Yes |
| ○ Constitution                           | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Registered Charity                     | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ VAT Registered                         | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Equal Opportunities Policy             | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Safeguarding Policy                    | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Reserves Policy                        | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Quality Mark                           | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Other funding sources pursued          | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Other support by the Council           | Yes *  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Fundraising                            | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Two quotes                             | N/A  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| ○ Regular monitoring provided previously | Yes  |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |
| 3.2 Consultee Comments                   | <p><u>Councillor Gary Elson and Councillor Deborah Hughes</u><br/>                 Woking Community Transport services are designed to promote the</p>   |                |     |                      |     |                  |     |                              |     |                       |     |                   |     |                |     |                                 |     |                                |       |               |     |              |     |  |     |

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health and well-being, independence and social inclusion of our residents. The sight of a 'Bustler' is a common one around the Borough and it has become an integral part of our support for our elderly and vulnerable in the community. This last year has been exceptional and WCT has demonstrated its flexibility to adapt and to respond to the national crisis. It continued to function throughout lockdown taking DAR members to hospital appointments and other essential visits; it has provided PPE deliveries for the NHS; deliveries of food for the food bank, ferrying of users of the York Rd Project in their refurbishment of St Marys and Moorcroft . They have adapted their working hours, working longer into the evenings and at weekends.

WCT have operated a free Dial a Ride (DAR) for 2 months over the summer to encourage those who were isolated to start to get out. Numbers of DAR users in June were 189, by September this increased to 819. Services have recommenced to the community centres.

Last year was a good year for WCT and they were able to move forward in progressing the service. Contactless card readers are now in situ on the DAR service. They have taken delivery of the first 2 electric vehicles with the aspiration of gradually becoming an all - electric fleet over time. They are the first community transport in the Country to go down this route.

They are looking ahead at new models of working in the post Covid world. Surrey choices for example has indicated that they will not be returning to their pre Covid model but will be providing a flexi choice approach with a block access approach and mix of home visits. They are in discussion with NWS CCG on the new non-emergency transport contract where an increased role may exist for WCT. The business continues to actively seek new opportunities.

Over the past year 2019/20 WCT have made a further increase in journeys (121 319- 127,357), this continues the year on year increase in resident demand for their services. DAR journeys alone have increased by over 13% in year. Their user membership continues to increase. They have a business model which works by flexing the services provided to their contracts to SCC and the NHS with that they provide for WBC. This enables an improved utilisation of the vehicles throughout the working day for the benefit of our residents. They have increased their journeys to the Council's Centres by almost 8% in the year.

Their work with the NHS has increased providing a door to door service for the elderly to Woking, Walton and Ashford Hospital Hubs, on fully accessible vehicles. They have been able to reintroduce the service to Ashford Hospital which is particularly important for our residents as Ashford becomes increasingly the non- acute site for out -patient services as St Peters remains the Covid site and acute centre.

The grant request from WBC is a reduction in real terms for the fourth consecutive year. However this does not indicate that this grant is not essential to their continued existence. Indeed the grant provided by the Council is the core of their funding. Without this the DAR service would not be viable, nor would the services provided to the four community centres. The grant for the town centre buggy supports this service which is otherwise a cost pressure.



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The Councillor observers are confident that the Council's grant funding of WCT is well spent and constitutes good value for money, and therefore fully support their application for these grants.

Diana Chan, Health and Wellbeing Manager

WCT is based in Woking and relies upon grants from WBC and SCC to provide borough wide Dial a ride, centres for the community transport, and group transport services. Additionally, under contract, WCT provides services to SCC (Home to School (SEND) and Adult & Community Care) and is working with the NHS (North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group) and the South Central Ambulance Trust in respect of Hospital related non-emergency patient transport.

WCT also delivers transport services for the Woking Community Hospital, Bedser Hub, and similar Hub services at Ashford and Walton Hospitals, and transport on behalf of Woking Adult Social Services. The Hubs provide proactive and reactive care for older people with frailty and multiple long-term conditions who are registered with a Woking GP. The service is provided by an integrated team of health, mental health and social care staff. It is an innovative, multi-disciplinary model that has received local and national praise for the benefits it has delivered for patients and the local health system overall.

In addition to the above, WCT also manages the Town Centre Buggy.

I am supportive of the £205,000 requested which will enable Bustler to continue to provide their valued scheduled (free to join) Dial a ride service, which operates across the borough, including transport for members to the main hospitals outside of Woking (St Peters, Ashford and The Royal Surrey). In addition, they will continue to provide transport for residents to the Woking Borough Centres for the Community and their vehicles will also be made available for use by community groups, with a WCT driver or on a self-drive basis (subject to MIDAS training).

They will also continue to improve and increase their services by investing in the most environmentally efficient vehicles, including fully electric, and by adding additional vehicles to our services. They also plan to develop an app for customer use on all services, to be used in conjunction with their vehicle tracking system.

To ensure customer safety, they have also introduced CCTV on to many of their vehicles. The CCTV will record the road ahead and an image of the inside of the vehicle, allowing them to review footage if needed.

### 3.3 Assessment

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 2019/20 38,081 passenger journeys were undertaken. In addition, 3,826 group transport journeys were completed. The total membership of the Dial-a-Ride service has increased by 174 users over the past year.

The Group is applying for a revenue grant of £205,000 to provide its valued Dial-a-Ride service operating across the Borough, including

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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.

Since WCT 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 the Council.

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 transport services for the locality hubs based in Woking, Ashford and Walton. It continually tries to improve its financial position by attracting new contracts, previously resulting in particular success with Surrey Choices, improving margins on existing agreements and also seeking sponsorship donations.

WCT has stated that it has been invited to participate in the 2019/20 Parliamentary Review, which focuses on individual industry sectors. The aim is to share knowledge and best practice to help raise standards nationally, with 13 organisations participating within the transport sector. In addition, Surrey County Council has asked the Group to take part in its Rethinking Transport projects, and is assisting with potential pilot.

It should be noted that for many users, the services provided by WCT are essential in enabling them to get out and about in the Borough. The Group 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 WCT for its Bustler service is approved at £205,000 as applied for.

REPORT ENDS