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**TITLE: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GRANT SCHEME**

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1 To agree the allocation of the Community Transport Grant Scheme funding to the East Cambridgeshire Bus Services Review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Members are requested to agree to allocate the Community Grant Scheme funding to the East Cambridgeshire Bus Services Review.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1 The District Council has previously allocated £15,000 from the Council's budget each year to support local Community Transport Schemes in recognition of the important role they play in providing much needed transport for residents, particularly those living in more rural areas, where scheduled buses do not operate or only provide a limited service.
- 3.2 At the January 2019 meeting of the Community Services Committee, Members agreed to invite applications for the Community Transport Scheme for 2019/2020. The amount of funding available was £43,500. It was agreed that evaluated expression of interest forms would be presented to the Community Services Committee in May 2019 for Members to approve any allocations of funds. However, as one of the applications related to the East Cambs Connect Service, Officers have waited for the outcome of the CCC tender exercise for the Service in July before reporting back to Members.
- 3.3 Four application forms were received and appraised:
- 3.4 ESACT requested the full amount (£43,500) to fund a replacement for the East Cambs Connect Service. Cambridgeshire County Council have since awarded ESACT grant funding to run a dial-a-ride service covering the north of the district. The south of the district is served by The Voluntary Network dial-a-ride scheme.
- 3.5 Isleham Parish Council requested £6,012 for a Thursday bus service to take people from Isleham to Fordham to access existing buses which serve Fordham. The proposal was for one bus in the morning at 10am and two in the afternoon at 2:30pm and 4:30pm.

- 3.6 The Voluntary Network requested £4,270 towards enhancing and promoting their existing Community Car Service in East Cambridgeshire.
- 3.7 Viva Arts and Community Group requested £8,870 towards the purchase of a TukTuk, insurance and staff costs associated with the service. Viva have since been successful in purchasing the TukTuk. The service is reliant on volunteer drivers.
- 3.8 Since the January Community Services Committee meeting was held, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has published a Strategic Bus Review and established a cross-organisational 'Bus Reform Group' to consider the findings of the review and develop an implementation strategy based on the recommendations of the Strategic Bus Review. This has given rise to a more strategic use for the funding, which wasn't an option when the Community Services Committee agreed to invite expressions of interest.

#### 4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Council is planning to carry out a consultation exercise to help inform the CPCA review of bus services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is envisaged that all Councillors will be involved in the consultation to identify key bus routes for local residents that meet one or more of the following journey purposes:
- Access to work
  - Access to learning
  - Access to healthcare and wellbeing support
  - Access to food shopping
  - Access to leisure.
- 4.2 The aim of the consultation is to identify routes that are viable, or can become viable over a period of time, and to seek funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and other sources for a trial period to allow routes to become established and self-financing.
- 4.3 It is proposed that a Member Working Party be set up to guide this work. If this is approved, its role will be to assist officers in carrying out the consultation and review. It will comprise 5 Members and report to this Committee.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the Community Grant Scheme funding available to date be used to help seed fund routes identified through the Bus Services Review in the first year, as this will enable to money to have a greater impact on bus services across the district. Routes will be selected following consultation with residents to ensure they meet local need. They will be mainstream services that don't require membership to access or need pre-booking as per the dial-

a-ride, community car and TukTuk proposals, making them accessible to a greater number of people.

- 4.5 The requests for grant funding only provide an in year funding solution. Whilst the submitted projects can provide a service for 2019/2020, the applicants have indicated that they are reliant on income from users and further grants to support the services from 2020 onwards. A further benefit of using the funding towards routes selected via the Bus Services Review is that it offers an opportunity for long term sustainability of services and to reduce reliance on public sector subsidies, making it a more efficient use of the money.
- 4.6 Whilst the routes selected will need a greater initial subsidy, the focus of the Review will be to identify routes that generate the highest fare income and greatest sustainability.
- 4.7 The ECDC Bus Service Review will compliment rather than compete with existing Community Transport schemes and providers will be consulted with as part of the Review process. If Members agree, the routes proposed through the grant scheme will be considered as part of the Review.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The grant available for Community Transport Scheme was £43,500 (£13,500 from 2016/17, £15,000 from 2017/18 and £15,000 from 2018/19). A further £15,000 is allocated in the Council budget for 2019/2020, bringing the total to £58,500.
- 5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required.

#### 6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 None

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<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer</u></b>
Minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	Room13 The Grange, Ely	Sally Bonnett Infrastructure and Strategy Manager (01353) 616451 <a href="mailto:sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk">sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk</a>