

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER**

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:
HUMBER & WOLDS COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a grant for Humber & Wolds Community Transport (HWCT).
- 1.2 To ensure that a social car service continues to run in North Lincolnshire for people who have no transport of their own and cannot use buses or trains.
- 1.3 Funding is available in the approved budget for 2011/12 and the planned budget for 2012/13.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 HWCT provides a social car service for elderly or disabled people who need to make essential journeys but cannot use public transport and have no car of their own or anyone who can take them. The service arranges for volunteers to provide journeys using their own cars. The user pays the driver's expenses for the trip, usually a sum between the bus fare and a taxi fare.
- 2.2 The service is based in Barton and helps people living in the rural parts of North Lincolnshire. It provides journeys within the area and to outside destinations such as hospitals.
- 2.3 The service provides over 7,000 trips per year. 90% of these are for trips to doctors, hospitals and other health related appointments. It has a list of 1,250 users and 47 volunteer drivers.
- 2.4 The Council has grant-aided this service for over 11 years. The payment in 2010/11 was £12,000. The money goes not to the users or the volunteer drivers but contributes to the cost of the core of paid staff. These people act as brokers between the clients who ring up to request transport and the volunteers who provide it.
- 2.5 Experience shows that it is not possible to run the service without paid staff. However, their work supports thousands of hours of volunteer drivers' time.

- 2.6 All volunteers are cleared to “Enhanced CRB” level for work with vulnerable adults. The clearance is renewed every three years. HWCT also check driving licences, MOT’s and insurance annually.
- 2.7 If the grant is approved, we shall prepare a simple agreement with HWCT to set out the service they will provide in return for the grant.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The options are to continue providing the annual grant, with a small increase in line with the retail price index, to reduce it or to end it.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTION

- 4.1 It is possible for the Council to cease payments to HWCT. This would free about £12,000 per year for other needs. If this happened, however, the service would lose the majority of its income. Its activities would be much reduced and it might close.
- 4.2 This would have a serious impact on the people who rely on the service and its volunteers for essential transport. These are some of the least mobile people in North Lincolnshire. They value the service very highly.
- 4.3 The council’s public transport policies say that the council will give financial support for the service to enable it to supplement conventional public transport. (Local Transport Plan 2, 2006).
- 4.4 We recommend that the council’s support for the service should be continued. A commitment for two years would help to give HWCT some stability.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Finance

- 5.1.1 The approved budget for public transport subsidies in 2011/12 is £822,420.
- 5.1.2 A grant of £12,600 in 2011/12 would maintain the previous level of support, with an increase of 5% to cover inflation. This represents a payment of about £1.80 per trip, well below the £3 per trip which the council considers a reasonable subsidy limit.
- 5.1.3 The planned budget for public transport in 2012/13 is less than in 2011/12 and we will need to review the council’s commitments. However, the grant to HWCT is small in comparison with spending on many contracted bus services and is targeted at people with mobility problems making essential trips.

5.2 There are no staffing, property or IT implications for the council.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

6.1.1 The council has a duty to consider where it should provide public transport services which it considers are essential, but which are not part of the commercial network (Transport Act 1985, Section 63 (1)). Section 63 (8) requires us to take account of the needs of elderly or disabled people.

6.2 Diversity

6.2.1 HWCT exists specifically to help these groups of people. The service provides a safety net for those who have no other means of making essential journeys.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 This report recommends that we should continue an existing commitment so we have not consulted widely. We have consulted HWCT who wish to keep the service going.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That a grant of £12,600 be paid to Humber & Wolds Community transport in 2011/12

8.2 That a grant of £12,600 plus an increase in line with the retail price index be paid in 2012/13.

The council's support for the service be reviewed again at the end of 2012/13.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Information provided by HWCT on file 11/1399 held by the Public Transport Team.