

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

**HUMBER AND WOLDS RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL:
VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a grant for Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council (HWRCC).
- 1.2 This will ensure that a voluntary car service continues to run in North Lincolnshire for people who need to make essential journeys but have no transport of their own and who cannot use buses or trains.
- 1.3 Funding is available in the planned budget for 2015/16.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 HWRCC provides a voluntary car service (VCS) for elderly or disabled people who need to make essential journeys but can't use public transport and have no car of their own or anyone who can otherwise transport them.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The service is based in Barton upon Humber and helps people living in the rural parts of North Lincolnshire. It provides journeys within the area and to outside destinations such as hospitals. The service is very highly valued by its users.
- 2.4 Since April 2014, the service was expanded to include Scunthorpe and Bottesford. The scheme transported 6,193 passengers between April 2014 to January 2015. This is an average of 667 per month. This leads to an expected outturn of 8,000 users for 2014/15 which will meet the annual target. This compares to the number of users in 2013/14 which was 7,422. Around 90% of all trips are to the doctor, hospitals or other health related appointments. The average subsidy cost per passenger is 2.02p. (October 2014).

- 2.5 The council has grant-aided this service for 18 years. The payment in 2014/15 was £15,000 and covers the whole of North Lincolnshire. The money goes not to the users or the volunteer drivers but covers the cost of a paid staff member. They act as a broker between the clients who ring up to request transport and the volunteers who provide it. The funding also covers telephone charges and a share of accommodation expenses.
- 2.6 All volunteers are cleared by the Disclosure and Barring service to work with vulnerable adults. The clearance is renewed every three years. HWRCC also checks driving licences, MOTs and insurance annually of voluntary drivers and their vehicles.
- 2.7 HWRCC also has a contract with the People Directorate to arrange and provide volunteer drivers for the universal prevention service. They are paid a separate grant for this work.
- 2.8 The council wishes to encourage volunteers to provide services for the community. The VCS has been doing this for many years and is an important element in the community transport mix in North Lincolnshire.
- 2.9 If the grant is approved, we shall prepare a simple agreement with HWRCC to set out the service they will provide in return for the grant funding.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Option 1: Provide grant aid to continue the VCS.
- 3.2 Option 2: Provide no grant in 2015/16 and subsequent years.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 If we provide grant aid, the service will continue. It helps people who would otherwise be unable to travel. It also supports thousands of hours of volunteer drivers' time.
- 4.2 If we withdraw grant aid, the service is likely to cease. Experience shows that it is not possible to run the service without paid staff at the core. The end of the service will make arrangements more difficult for users to access medical services etc.

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

- 5.1 **Financial** A grant of £15,000 will enable the service to continue and cover all of North Lincolnshire. This can be met from the existing public transport budget.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 The assessment highlights the service's benefits to older people and people with disabilities who live in rural parts of North Lincolnshire. If it ends, they will be unable to make essential journeys.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 We have discussed the future of the VCS with HWRCC. They will be unable to provide the service without a grant from the Council.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves a grant of £15,000 in 2015/16 to HWRCC to support the Voluntary Car Service.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Date:19 February 2015

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Humber and Wolds file