

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee 3 November 2011
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager (Community and Customer Services)
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Nick Wright, Planning Portfolio Holder

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Purpose

1. To enable the Committee to scrutinise the progress made with regard to the implementation of the South Cambridgeshire Community Transport Strategy 2010-2012.
2. To brief the Committee regarding the County Council-led 'Cambridgeshire Future Transport' (CFT) initiative.
3. To summarise the impact of CFT on the development of a second phase of Community Transport Strategy work in South Cambridgeshire.

Options

4. The committee may wish to
 - a) note the progress made in implementing the SCDC Community Transport Strategy 2010-12;
 - b) make recommendations regarding future work related to the strategy;
 - c) note the County Council-led initiative, Cambridgeshire Future Transport
 - d) make recommendations regarding Cambridgeshire Future Transport

Background - SCDC Community Transport Strategy 2010-12

5. Cabinet agreed the Community Transport Strategy 2010-2012 and action plan on 11 February 2010. A Steering Group of elected members, as well as relevant officers from SCDC and partner organisations as required, monitors the Strategy and Action Plan on a quarterly basis. The next meetings are planned for the end of November 2011.
6. The Steering Group, made up of self-selected elected member volunteers following a workshop for district and county councillors when the strategy was being developed, consists:
 - Councillor D. Bard
 - Councillor R. Barrett
 - Councillor J. Batchelor (District and County)
 - Councillor L. Heazell
 - Councillor N. Wright
 - Councillor F. Whelan (County)
 - Councillor S. van de Ven (County)
7. All of the current actions within the plan have been updated and can be found at **Appendix A**. The elected member Steering Group and Planning Portfolio Holder

have approved any changes to the original action plan, which can be found at <http://www.scams.gov.uk/CommunityandLiving/CommunityTransport.htm>

8. Recent focus has been on:
 - (a) **Publicity** - Awareness raising and promotional work continues. Community Transport leaflets have been produced and are being distributed across the district to GP surgeries, older people's groups and organisations, schools, Parish Councils and through District Councillors to their local communities. Workshops are attended, presentations given and meetings organised by the Partnerships Officer to raise the profile of Community Transport.
 - (b) **Community Connect** - the Children and young people's locality team in the Comberton, Bassingbourn, Melbourn and Gamlingay locality are leading on a partnership project to improve services for children and young people. The SCDC Partnerships Officer chairs the subgroup devoted to improving Community Transport as a travel option for young people. There is a separate, dedicated action plan for this Community Transport work, which is focussed on small pilot projects that can support young people to travel. One aim is to reduce NEET numbers where transport is a barrier to accessing education, employment and training.
 - (c) **Support to Providers** - ongoing support is being provided to the deliverers of Community Transport services of all sizes. Some of the larger services are given targets to develop their services in areas of the district where there are gaps and in specific ways (group transport, individual transport, young passengers, hospital journeys etc). This is monitored and support is provided to help with achieving the targets. Support to car schemes is provided through Care Network Cambridgeshire, whose contract is monitored quarterly.
9. The background to the CFT initiative is set out in **Appendix B**, a paper that appeared before the County Council's Cabinet on 25 October 2011.
10. Cllr Nick Wright is a member of the Governance Group for CFT and a number of SCDC officers have been involved at the most appropriate level and stages of the scoping of CFT.

Considerations

11. South Cambridgeshire Community Transport work continues and is embedded in the role of the Partnerships Officer. The Strategy and Action Plan are due to be refreshed at the end of the 2010-12 period and this will provide the ideal opportunity to ensure the work reflects the current and evolving local Community Transport priorities. Any changes will be implemented subject to the approval of the Steering Group.
12. Since the County-level picture is in a state of flux, the existing documents may need to be carried over for another year until the strategic direction of the CFT initiative is clearer and can be aligned to SCDC priorities.
13. The 'Micro-Franchising' element of the initiative in particular will have a great bearing on the future direction of the SCDC Community Transport Strategy. At this stage of the CFT project, and taking into consideration the fact that the Micro-Franchising project is in pilot stage, there are a number of unknowns that will, in time, provide context and strategic direction for SCDC work.
14. County and District Officers have identified a number of issues yet to be ironed out and some areas of work yet to be determined, including:

- (a) The exact size, location and remit of the micro-franchise pilots and any subsequent franchise areas;
- (b) How future franchise areas will be determined and aligned to existing Community Transport services;
- (c) The timescales for developing franchise areas beyond the pilot phase and to what extent this will be determined by the expiration of contracts and subsidies for existing passenger transport;
- (d) What market research needs to be done to gauge demand for services, the commercial viability of franchises, and availability of franchisees;
- (e) Whether partnership working can be improved to ensure that communication and data sharing occur appropriately;
- (f) What would happen in an area where no franchisee were forthcoming (SCDC will need to consider how its Community Transport Strategy could ensure the needs of passengers are met);
- (g) Whether local, regional and national models of 'franchising' exist from which good practice can be drawn;
- (h) How all of the above will influence the development of the Community Transport Strategy for South Cambridgeshire beyond March 2012.

Implications

15. Financial	No funding has been allocated to Community Transport Strategy work for 2011-12 and beyond.
Legal	The South Cambridgeshire Community Transport strategy touches on licensing law, with respect to the operation of voluntary car schemes. Licensing of franchises will be addressed jointly by the County Council and franchisees.
Staffing	The development and delivery of the Community Transport Strategy currently sits with the Community and Customer Services corporate area, specifically within the Partnerships Team. Officer time has been prioritised to progress actions and co-ordinate the delivery of the strategy. The Planning Policy Team, as requested by the team manager, will lead further strategy development.
Risk Management	The Steering Group monitors the action plan on a quarterly basis and as such manages any risks that arise regarding the implementation of actions.
Equality and Diversity	Inequalities are reduced through the extension of Community Transport in the district, so that all residents are able to access Community Transport if they are eligible. As well as increasing coverage across the district, the action plan seeks to extend the eligibility criteria of schemes to include other vulnerable/ disadvantaged groups in the district where they are currently excluded e.g. young people who are rurally isolated or are unable to drive due to their age.
Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes. A partial assessment was carried out on 11 February 2010 (agreed 7 April 2010). The assessment showed no adverse impact (medium or high impact) on target groups.
Involving children and young people	A recent consultation with young people about their transport needs and awareness of Community Transport resulted in 200 responses, which have been used to inform relevant areas of Community Transport Strategy work.
Climate Change	The strategy includes actions relating to the environmental sustainability of Community Transport services.

Consultations

16. The strategy in its first draft was consulted on publicly between October 2009 and Jan 2010 and workshops were held during the consultation period for South Cambridgeshire District and County Councillors, as well as relevant officers, which informed the development of the strategy and action plan.
17. Further public consultation would be necessary as part of the development of a Community Transport Strategy beyond March 2012.
18. The sharing of results of any partner consultations relating to Public and Community Transport would be advantageous in helping to develop Community Transport work at the district level.

Effect on Strategic Aims

19. The Community Transport Strategy 2010-12 and Action Plan assists the Council to specifically achieve the strategic aim to provide a voice for rural life by playing a part in improving rural services including transport links. The Council has a specific action in 2011-12 to implement actions from the Community Transport Strategy 2010-2012 to increase coverage and better publicise existing provision, particularly for older residents and others at risk of isolation.

Conclusions / Summary

20. The actions associated with the Community Transport Strategy 2010-12 are progressing well, with the majority now well underway and where applicable embedded within service delivery. The future development of the Community Transport Strategy beyond March 2012 is unclear and will depend greatly on the strategic direction taken at County level.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

[Community Transport Strategy](#) and Action Plan

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