

North Yorkshire Council

Environment Executive Members

22 February 2024

Integrated Passenger Transport funding for Community Transport schemes

Report of the Assistant Director for IPT, Licensing, Public Rights of Way & Harbours

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out revised proposals for Community Transport funding provided by Integrated Passenger Transport (ITP) and seek approval for these.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Community Transport is an important part of the public transport network in North Yorkshire helping people access essential services and reducing social isolation. There are currently 15 supported Volunteer Car Schemes and five supported Dial-a-Ride Schemes across North Yorkshire, delivered by 16 voluntary organisations. North Yorkshire Council provides funding for these schemes which compliments the support provided for local bus services.
- 2.2 The Covid pandemic presented many challenges for community transport providers and since then there has been a gradual process of restarting services and reconnecting with local communities.
- 2.3 To provide financial stability for community transport providers during the period of Covid recovery we continued to provide funding with reimbursement based on the number of journeys made 2019/20.
- 2.4 The number of community transport journeys made across North Yorkshire has now plateaued at approximately 70% of pre Covid usage. This is similar to the percentage of concessionary bus pass trips now being made on local bus routes.

3.0 CURRENT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT FUNDING

- 3.1 The existing reimbursement rate was set several years ago and no longer reflects the challenges in the community transport sector and changed travel patterns following the pandemic.
- 3.2 There are two types of community transport in operation; volunteer car schemes using smaller vehicles or Dial-A-Ride schemes which use larger MPV or minibuses and offer more accessible access.
- 3.3 Funding for volunteer car schemes is currently £1 per trip for schemes carrying up to 4,000 passengers per year or £1.25 per trip if carrying over 4,000. There is also a £4,000 annual grant towards organisational costs for schemes carrying over 4,000 passengers per year. Dial-a-Ride trips are reimbursed at £1 per passenger. This is summarised in the table below:

Passengers per annum	£ per passenger	£ Organisation cost
Car Scheme < 4,000 trips	£1.00	Nil
Car Scheme > 4,000 trips	£1.25	£4,000
Dial-a-Ride	£1.00	Nil

4.0 REVIEW OF FUNDING FORMULA AND NEW PROPOSALS

4.1 Engagement took place with all providers using questionnaires and discussions to understand the challenges being faced and inform future proposals.

4.2 The main issues reported with the current funding formula are:

- Funding formula has not been reviewed for several years.
- No inflationary increase has been applied for several years.
- The threshold of 4,000 journeys to receive additional support towards organisation costs is no longer appropriate.
- Schemes advised it would not be viable to continue should existing reimbursement rates be applied to post pandemic travel patterns.

4.3 In order to provide financial stability for our community transport operators and encourage growth and the start-up of new schemes it is proposed to revise reimbursement as follows:

- End use of pre-covid data & reimburse using actual trip data from 01 April 2024
- End organisational payments and tiered rates for volunteer car schemes and consolidate into a flat rate of £3.00 per journey
- Increase Dial-a-Ride reimbursement to £1.24 which aligns this with the average Concessionary Travel journey reimbursement rate made for bus operators.

4.4 Funding will change as shown below with an overall uplift of 9%. This maintains support at similar levels to now for scheme operators and reflects the fact that there has been no inflation increase applied in recent years.

	Current Annual Cost (£)	2024/25 Estimated Cost (£)	Estimated Additional Cost (£)
Volunteer Car Scheme	£106,654	£118,152	£11,498
Dial-a-Ride Scheme	£6,902	£7,495	£593
Total	£113,556	£125,647	£12,091

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 To do nothing would mean funding continuing to be based on pre-covid travel which does not reflect emerging travel behaviour and would limit the growth of community transport schemes. Retaining a tiered approach to funding was considered but feedback from most operators supported moving to a single rate per journey. There is also an existing small grants scheme that community transport groups can access for organisational support such as provision of computer equipment or booking software.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial information and revised cost is set out in section 4 above.

6.2 The recommendation can be funded from within the existing budget for the Integrated Passenger Transport Service and aligns community transport reimbursement with actual use made by residents. It maintains core funding for operators and will allow existing schemes to develop and new ones to start up. It also provides an inflation uplift to help these small community schemes manage rising costs.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has a wide range of statutory duties imposed by a variety of legislation relating to passenger transport. There is no statutory requirement to provide or support community transport.
- 7.2 This review has been carried out with consideration to relevant legislation such as the Transport Act 1985, Transport Act 2000 and Education Act 1996, in addition to section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for adverse equality impact arising from this proposal. It is the view of officers that this will have no direct impact on groups of people with protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010. Proper regard has been given to public sector equality duty and a 'decision not to EIA' document has been completed and is appended at Appendix A.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for adverse climate impacts arising from this decision and a Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) screening has taken place. This proposal will encourage use of community transport in place of private cars, and it is not felt appropriate to progress to a full CCIA (see Appendix B).

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The proposal will set revised reimbursement reflecting changing travel patterns after the pandemic. It will maintain core funding for community transport schemes; will allow existing schemes to develop and encourage new ones to start up. The recommended approach can be funded from the existing budget for community transport.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 That the Corporate Director for Environment, following consultation with the Executive Member for Highways & Transportation, approves the proposed revisions to community transport funding detailed in section 4 of the report.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment screening form
Appendix B – Climate Change Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: none

Paul Thompson
Assistant Director for IPT, Licensing, Public Rights of Way & Harbours.
County Hall
Northallerton
22 February 2024

Report author: Andy Clarke, Public and Community Transport Manager

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Environment		
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport		
Proposal being screened	Community Transport funding		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Andy Clarke		
What are you proposing to do?	Revise funding formula for community transport schemes		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	The proposal will set revised reimbursement reflecting changing travel patterns after the pandemic. It will maintain core funding for community transport schemes; will allow existing schemes to develop and encourage new ones to start up.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No.		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g.	Community transport is relied on by older and disabled users and those in rural areas who are unable to access traditional public transport.		

Appendix A

disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	Community transport is set up to improve services following identification of gaps in existing services. Maintaining or improving funding levels will improve transport opportunities for individuals, including those with protected characteristics.			
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	no			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	
Reason for decision	No adverse impact is anticipated as this proposal maintains or improves overall funding for community transport.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Paul Thompson			
Date	08.02.2024			

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance, please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:
 Planning Permission
 Environmental Impact Assessment
 Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	IPT Community Transport Funding	
Brief description of proposal	To revise the funding formula used to reimburse community transport schemes, taking account of changing travel patterns post covid and the need to maintain or increase current support.	
Directorate	Environment	
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport	
Lead officer	Andy Clarke	
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	None	
Date impact assessment started	6 February 2024	

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

To do nothing would mean funding continuing to be based on pre-covid travel which does not reflect emerging travel behaviour and would limit the growth of community transport schemes.

Retaining a tiered approach to funding was considered but feedback from operators supported removing this and using a single rate per journey for all schemes regardless of size.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Cost neutral as the proposal can be funded from within existing IPT budget.

How will this proposal impact on the environment? N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.		Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale? Where possible/relevant please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.	Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.	Emissions from travel	X			Supporting community transport will reduce travel by private car.	n/a	
	Emissions from construction		X		No impact.		
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		No impact.		
	Other						
Minimise waste : Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic		X			No impact.		
Reduce water consumption		X			No impact		
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)		X			No impact		

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes over and above business as usual Evidence or measurement of effect Figures for CO₂e Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers		X		No impact anticipated		
Enhance conservation and wildlife		X		No impact anticipated		
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape		X		No impact anticipated		
Other (please state below)		X		No impact anticipated		

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

N/A

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

This proposal will encourage support community transport which is used in place of private cars and will not have adverse climate impacts.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Andy Clarke
Job title	Public & Community Transport Manager
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport
Directorate	Environment
Signature	
Completion date	6/2/2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Paul Thompson

Date: 08.02.24

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