

SOUTH SOMERSET COMMUNITY ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

Lead Officer: Andy Chilton, Manager
Contact Details: sscatringride@yahoo.co.uk or (01963)34594

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress made over the last year. There are no financial implications for the council in this report.

Recommendation

That AEC members note the contents of the report.

Report Detail

SSDC Annual Report 2015

The core business of the company is a successful demand-responsive door-to-door Ring and Ride Service; this uses fully accessible minibuses to provide transport for people in the operating area of South Somerset who are unable to use public transport due to mobility difficulties, or because the local bus service provided is inadequate. Local community groups hire minibuses for social outings and trips in a wider geographical area. The company also operates a busy Social Car Scheme using volunteer drivers in their own cars to provide transport for hospital appointments further afield. This is an expanding, highly valued service due to the reduction in provision of hospital transport by the PCT.

It has been another very busy year for the service, with increased demand for both the ring and ride service, and the social car scheme. Although there are few County contracts available in this area, the scheme continues to transport people to a day centre at Wincanton Community Hospital once a week, and further afield to Yeovil. Transport for community groups fluctuates with very high demand last summer and in the month leading up to Christmas, but there has been very little demand in the months of January, February and March. A replacement minibus was ordered last October but due delays with manufacture, will not be delivered in the near future. We were also successful in a bid for a new minibus from a government scheme, but since being told of this in early April there is still no firm date set, as to when we might receive the vehicle.

Individual membership of the scheme has continued to grow this year with registered members at over 1,800. Five new community groups have also registered with the scheme over the last year.

Work is ongoing to develop Wincanton as a "Hub" for services for South East Somerset residents, as part of an initiative between South Somerset Together, SSDC and SCC. This will involve the scheme acting as a link, to services being delivered locally, and to other transport providers. Nigel Collins will elaborate as to current progress with this initiative in his report.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The 5 year grant from the Big Lottery fund is now in its last year but continues to provide some security for the scheme, providing income of £32,000 during this financial year, and the New Barns contract £10,000. Donations were received from individual members and some of the local town and parish councils.

County were approached in February regarding S106 funding for the Deansley Way development. Despite repeated requests from Tim Cook we have still received no response and it is feared this money may be lost to the town under the current distribution criteria. Our understanding is that the developer should provide a Sustainable Transport Pack for each house, and then reimburse each resident covered by a Green Travel Voucher up to the value of £400. The voucher can then be exchanged for use on public transport or equipment for cycling or working from home. The take up is thought to have been minimal.

We have healthy reserves which we have built up during our thirteen years of operation. The reserves are primarily for vehicle replacement, some of which will be used in the purchase of a new vehicle, currently on order. Bids to the District Council, Housing Associations and other local charities resulted in grants of £35,000 to help with the total cost of the vehicle which is £48,000. This will still leave a substantial sum in reserves but the priority for the scheme manager over the next year is to submit bids for further revenue grants.

South Somerset Community Accessible Transport					
Statistics for Inclusion in Report to SSDC Jun-15					
Quarter ending	30.6.14	30.9.14	31.12.14	31.3.15	Total
Mileage	17062	17429	16901	15609	67001
Single passenger Journeys	4434	4748	4442	3902	17526
Group Journeys	114	125	133	81	453
Social Car Journeys	318	295	278	296	1187