

APPENDIX TO MINUTE 469 - ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

A) AGREED RESPONSE (IN BOLD) TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES MEMBER LED REVIEW OF RURAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT

Recommendation 1 – Better Process For Allocating Funding

The Committee had significant concerns in two respects:

- There are concerns that, despite recent work, the Council does not have a clear mechanism for determining how and where to allocate its funding for subsidised transport.
- There are serious concerns about the apparent cost of some forms of subsidised transport. It appears that there is scope for efficiency gains amongst existing services. However, more work needs to be done on issues such as impact and cost before specific recommendations about redirecting funding can be made.

The Council should develop and adopt a robust scoring model to inform its decisions about the transport services it supports, similar to that used by Peterborough City Council. This should balance social need, cost-effectiveness, and number of people served.

Such a model would enable the Council to:

- Analyse existing services to identify where money could be redirected towards better value for money alternatives or higher priorities.
- Use section 106 contributions and other sources of funding to best effect, especially in the context of new settlements.
- Release funds to set up a Community Transport Brokerage Scheme (Recommendation 6)

By Whom – Director of Highways and Access

By When – Suggested target date for development of the scoring model - March 2008.

AGREED RESPONSE

This recommendation is fully supported and work is already in hand to develop a scoring matrix to enable the Council to better assess the true worth of individual rural services. This will be especially important given the current tight fiscal climate and the need to be able to defend Member decisions under public scrutiny. Action in response to this recommendation rightly falls to the Director Highways and Access and the target date appears realistic.

Recommendation 2 – Co-ordination of Funding for Community Transport

There are a variety of funding bodies that subsidise community transport in Cambridgeshire. This has resulted in a complicated situation for operators seeking funding, and a lack of clarity about which funding body or combination of funding bodies is supporting which schemes and why. It would therefore be helpful if these funding streams could be brought within the remit of the Local Area Agreement, in order to encourage more effective use of the money.

The Council should build on the existing good working relationships it has with its partners, including Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils, District Councils and the Primary Care Trust, to develop a clear vision for the provision of transport in rural areas and a forum for discussing and agreeing actions to deliver that vision. It is essential that the expertise of the relevant District Council Transport Officers is fully utilised in this process. One option for doing this could be to restart a forum similar to the Cambridgeshire Rural Transport Partnership, as such forums have worked well in other counties.

By Whom – Lead Member for Highways & Transport, Director of Highways and Access

By When – Setting up a forum is clearly dependant upon the support of partners. The development of the Second Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire could provide the opportunity to bring together funding streams. A target date of March 2008 is therefore suggested for taking this work forward.

AGREED RESPONSE

In principle, officers support this recommendation and would like to see more openness in order for stakeholders to understand the wider strategy and plans behind funding decisions. Re-starting a forum similar to the now defunct Rural Transport Partnership could be a suitable method to achieve this. However, it is important for the County Council to retain sole control of its available funding and not contribute this irrevocably to a pot overseen by others. Should the County Council decide to implement Demand Responsive Services in a part of the County, some of the necessary funding could come from the co-located Community Transport Schemes who would no longer need the funding (or part thereof). Regaining this funding could be difficult if it had been handed over to a central body. Nevertheless, there has to be a better way of co-ordinating the provision of funding than currently experienced and using the Council's good working relationships with its partners is the obvious way ahead to develop the wider strategy and vision.

Action in response to this recommendation rightly falls to the Lead Member for Highways and Transport and Director Highways and Access. The actions to be completed, or progress to be achieved, by

the stated target date is not exactly clear but work will commence to achieve the recommendation's intent as soon as is practicable.

Recommendation 3 – Operators' Forum

Part of the Council's obligations under the Transport Act 2007 will require us to work in more effective partnerships. Regular events for operators of community transport schemes and bus services should be organised by the Council, as forums to: discuss strategies, forthcoming initiatives and potential future sources of funding; exchange ideas; and facilitate networks that will help bring more cohesion to services.

As a minimum, there should be one event per year, and all operators should be encouraged to attend. It may be that separate forums for Community Transport operators and operators of contracted bus services would be most effective, but this may depend upon the issues being discussed. Possible topics could include discussing how the process for applying for County Council funding could be streamlined.

By Whom - Director of Highways and Access

By When – First event Spring 2008

AGREED RESPONSE

This recommendation is fully supported, as there is a definite void in the Council's formal interactions with operators as a group. Separate Community Transport and commercial operator forums seem most appropriate and the planning for a commercial operators meeting is already underway and a target meeting date of December 2007 has been set. Spring 2008 appears practical for a Community Transport Operators' Forum. Director Highways and Access is the appropriate lead officer.

Recommendation 4 – Pilot of a Demand Responsive Transport Scheme

Having considered the options for providing improved, more cost effective, rural public transport, this review recommends that the Council should carry out two pilot schemes to test the market for the introduction of a Demand Responsive Transport Scheme in Cambridgeshire. The location and design of these pilots should be informed by the consolidation of the information on accessibility and need currently available within the Council and amongst partners. Additional information should be collected by a survey of Parish Councils and market research within the pilot areas.

Pilots based in Huntingdonshire, around Huntingdon, and in the north of the County, around Wisbech, appear to be the most appropriate locations, based on the information currently available.

Accurate costings for these pilots need to be developed using a rigorous methodology. Regular monitoring information on usage of services also

needs to be gathered, to provide accurate information on costs per passenger. These pilot schemes should run for at least one year.

By Whom – Director of Highways and Access

By When – Pilot to begin by Autumn 2008

AGREED RESPONSE

The concept behind this recommendation is exciting and the recommendation fully supported. Work is already underway on an outline business case but, as has been learned in other counties, this will not be a simple and straightforward matter. The time necessary to consolidate all available accessibility information, complete a parish survey, gain funding, acquire the necessary equipment, complete training, contract for back office support, complete public consultation, register the bus services, draw up the pilot instruction and gain approval make the Autumn 2008 target very challenging indeed. The choice of pilot area, should funding be agreed, will be decided as part of the above process and may be different to the suggestion in the report as more information is obtained and the pilot developed. However, Director Highways and Access is the appropriate lead officer for this project.

Recommendation 5 – Public Transport Information

The Council should take steps to improve information and publicity on all public transport services, to create a unified public transport service comprised of commercial, subsidised and community transport options. This should include improvements to bus stop information and the introduction of a central contact point for information enquiries. Further improvements could include the development of a unified brand across operators running similar types of services and further work to spread the benefits of through-ticketing.

The way to achieve this, in collaboration with operators, could also be included on the agenda for the operators' forum recommended in Recommendation 3.

By Whom - Director of Highways and Access

By When – Suggested target date for developing proposals for the information centre - April 2008

AGREED RESPONSE

The need to improve the provision of public transport information has been well established and this recommendation is again supported. Although work has already started, the target date for developing proposals appears achievable providing resources are available.

Recommendation 6 – Community Transport Brokerage Scheme

A Community Transport Brokerage Scheme should be introduced to better utilise spare capacity within the sector, particularly the Council's own transport fleet, for the benefit of the community. Using its transport fleet in this way could bring additional income to the Council.

Future developments of this scheme should include building links with neighbouring counties, as far as practical, to provide a seamless service. Detailed proposals for the scheme should also take into account work already underway to make better links between the transport fleets of the County Council and the Ambulance Trust.

By Whom - Director of Highways and Access

By When – Target date for completion of a feasibility study – Spring 2008

AGREED RESPONSE

An improved Community Transport Brokerage Scheme could provide considerable benefits for those using and managing the schemes. However, there are inevitably going to be sensitivities among scheme stakeholders that will have to be addressed with patience and tact. Moreover, the scale of any resulting brokerage scheme will depend on other initiatives considering whether to completely out-source our existing social services vehicle fleet and current negotiations with Primary Care Trusts and the Ambulance Trusts to share resources.

Director Highways and Access is the appropriate lead officer. The target date for the completion of a feasibility target is very ambitious given the other variables on which this initiative depends.

Recommendation 7 – Energy Efficiency and Accessibility

The Council should encourage the use of the most energy efficient vehicles available. In particular, the Council should take the lead in this area by including energy efficiency considerations in its evaluation criteria when tendering services, and by ensuring that appropriately sized vehicles are used on routes wherever possible, particularly on the Demand Responsive Transport pilot schemes (Recommendation 4).

The Council should also take steps wherever possible to ensure that vehicles operated on its subsidised routes are accessible to all. On the Demand Responsive Transport pilot (Recommendation 4) in particular, the Council should endeavour to ensure that vehicles used are capable of carrying more than one wheelchair user.

By Whom – Director of Highways and Access

By When – Ongoing

AGREED RESPONSE

This recommendation is supported and is being implemented now. There are obvious constraints to its successful achievement as noted in the paper. Financial considerations inevitably mean that the Council will have to temper its desires for accessible and appropriately sized vehicles and this is recognised by the Government who have imposed, what it believes to be, achievable timescales on bus operators using accessible vehicles. Nevertheless, where it is feasible, the Council encourages operators to provide the most accessible and most appropriately sized vehicles. Director Highways and Access will continue to monitor this recommendation.

Recommendation 8 – European Union (EU) Regulations

The Committee have concerns about EU regulations on working time as they affect the operation of bus services. Operators testify that complying with these regulations can increase labour costs on routes above 50km by 8-9%, adding around 5% to the overall cost base. This means commercial operators are reluctant to route services off main roads and into villages, in order to keep route length and cost down, and leads to bus routes being broken into smaller chunks.

The committee recommend that strong representations should be made to the Government about EU regulations on working time as they relate to the costs of running bus services

By Whom – Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Services

By When – January 2008

AGREED RESPONSE

This is a very difficult issue on which to make recommendations. The EU set the rules for safety and exploitation reasons and, without evidence to the contrary, it is difficult to argue convincingly for a change. Therefore, it is suggested that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Services might wish to consider writing to the Department for Transport to seek its support to encourage the EU to investigate the potential for further research on this issue due to the financial implications the current rules have for local authorities and bus operators.

Recommendation 9 – Efficiency Gains and Financial Implications

Efficiency gains within this area could be considerable. The opportunities should be investigated for replacing the higher cost services (as set out in Paragraph 6.4.3, Table 2) with more efficient alternatives. To illustrate the magnitude of savings that could be achieved, if the highest cost service could be replaced by a service of equal quality but at average cost, this would

realise cashable efficiency gains of approximately £13,500. Redirecting subsidy from other less cost-effective routes would release further money.

Including the Council's vehicles in a Community Transport Brokerage scheme would also bring income to the Council. For example, Bedfordshire County Council receives payment for the hire of its vehicles through the Bedfordshire Community Transport Brokerage scheme at a rate of £20-£25 per day for use of the vehicle plus a fee per mile.

The development of the scoring model (Recommendation 1) will help the Council make better informed decisions, and identify opportunities for redirecting funds to better value for money alternatives.

The ECS Scrutiny Committee has a target of identifying efficiency gains worth £22,500 during 2007-08. These savings do not necessarily need to be realised during 2007-08, only identified. The Committee therefore feel that the potential gains in this area will realise its target.

A number of this review's other recommendations will require extra investment to be made. Indicative costs for the Demand Responsive Transport Pilot (Recommendation 4) can be found in Paragraph 7.3.6. Indicative costs for introducing the Community Transport Brokerage scheme (Recommendation 6) can be drawn from the Bedfordshire example, Case Study 2.

By Whom – Director of Highways and Access
By When – March 2009

AGREED RESPONSE

The efficiency gain figures shown in the report should only be considered as being potentially achievable. It may be that the costs incurred in the most expensive schemes are the cheapest available to provide the requisite level of service. Moreover, savings achieved in one area that are then re-invested in another transport area, would show an efficiency gain in terms of more being achieved for the same, but would not show cashable efficiency gains. With this proviso in mind, this recommendation to achieve efficiency gains wherever possible is supported and has been tasked to the appropriate Director.

B) AGREED RESPONSE (IN BOLD) TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HASC) MEMBER LED REVIEW OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION ON DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-18.

Strategic Planning and Funding

Recommendation 1 *

The County Council make representation to Government requesting that Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs) are given early notification of the level of Young People's Substance Misuse Partnership Grant (YPSMPG) they will receive for the following 3 years, so that they are able to plan effectively.

AGREED RESPONSE

The Adult Treatment Commissioning Group wrote to the National Treatment Agency, the body responsible for monitoring of the DAAT at Government Office, to raise this issue. The present position is that the Young People's Substance Misuse Grant for 08/09 is expected to be at the same level as 07/08 though this has yet to be confirmed. Needless to say this makes forward planning difficult.

Recommendation 2 *

The DAAT partner agencies consider how they can contribute towards sustaining and developing preventive work with young people over a longer time scale, through:

- Identifying where existing mainstream activities and programmes of work that relate to the well-being of young people can be used in an effective and co-ordinated way
- Identifying where existing mainstream resources can be used more effectively to complement the Government funding received through the DAAT.

This should be reflected in the 3-year Young People's Substance Misuse Strategy, and the annual action plans, from 2008 onwards.

The Strategy and action plans should:

- Address the specific gaps in provision that Councillors have identified (set out in recommendations below)
- Clearly identify how actions will be resourced
- Maximise the opportunities to access any available external funding
- Ensure value for money through effective use of commissioning and by continuous improvement in performance management. This should include systematic evaluation of initiatives and programmes to ensure that best use is made of resources.

The opportunity should be taken to make most effective use through interagency working of the funding for drug and alcohol related work, which will be channelled through the Local Area Agreement.

AGREED RESPONSE

This recommendation is somewhat aspirational in nature given the present level of available resources. The DAAT is working with the universal services to ensure that staff in Locality Teams and also those staff and partners who work in preventative activity are suitably trained to provide early interventions and to recognise what they can provide themselves as well as when to refer cases to more specialist services. This includes the provision of information and resources such as the DAAT Handbook, which will be revised in 08/09. An allocation for training of front line staff has been made from the Young People's Substance Misuse Grant.

There is new national guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence concerning the effective delivery of PSHE in schools, which will be reviewed and implemented in partnership with the PSHE service. The DAAT will also consider a literature review by Julie Owens at Health regarding effective practice at a preventative stage.

Alcohol Strategy

Recommendation 3*

The County Council and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) should work with partner agencies through the DAAT and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Board to develop an alcohol strategy and action plans covering adults and children and young people. Resources for the strategy should be identified, taking a co-ordinated approach to make most effective use of available funding.

AGREED RESPONSE

This is agreed. An alcohol strategy is being commissioned at present by the DAAT for April 08. The DAAT has put forward a Local Public Service Reward Grant bid for a Alcohol Strategic Lead as a three year post. The County Community Safety Strategic Assessment, written in partnership with the Districts and the Police, demonstrates the significant need for such a post to be created given the significant harm caused by alcohol in communities as well as to public health and the criminal justice system

Support for drug and alcohol agencies

Recommendation 4

- The level of staffing for young people's drug and alcohol outreach work is reviewed, to identify whether it is sufficient, and the DAAT partner agencies identify resources to increase capacity if required.**
- Future funding and staffing arrangements should maintain the principle of geographical equity of outreach services across the county.**

AGREED RESPONSE

There is little prospect of an increase to staffing for the DAAT concerning young people's substance misuse given the budget position. The Young People's Coordinator is leaving and a new post holder will be recruited in the New Year. There are opportunities to link the work of the Coordinator more closely to the Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment led by Mary Whitehand, Head of Partnership and Performance.

Drug and alcohol education in schools

Recommendation 5*

The Council recognises the key contribution of the PSHE service, and that it is an example of good practice that is valued by its users and provides value for money, and ensures that it remains a high priority in the Integrated Planning Process.

Response

As already highlighted new National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidance has been published regarding the delivery of PSHE. The service is well regarded and highly valued. The investment in preventative work in schools does remain an area of risk in terms of the current spread of services, which are required to be commissioned by the Young People's Substance Misuse Commissioning Group.

Recommendation 6

The Council fully explores the potential of increasing the income that the PSHE generates through sales of its material and expertise, including considering whether there is scope for an Invest to Save initiative.

AGREED RESPONSE

This will be explored and considered further with the Head of the PSHE Service.

Recommendation 7

Further work is done to evaluate the impact of the PSHE programme on young people's knowledge, skills and attitude, and, as far as possible, on young people's drug and alcohol related behaviour.

AGREED RESPONSE

The roll out of the Healthy Schools initiative and accreditation across the County is one method of schools self evaluating and then moderating their delivery of work to the Healthy Schools standard. Young people conduct the Health related behaviour questionnaire, a self-report survey in schools bi annually in year 8 and in year 10. The

data is presented back to schools to evaluate their work by the PSHE service.

Professional training

Recommendation 8

The DAAT partner agencies identify the training needs of front line workers across all sectors, and how these can be most effectively met in future by using existing capacity and resources, and investing additional resourcing if this is required. This should be reflected in the Young Persons Substance Misuse Strategy and action plans. Evaluation of training programmes should be built in to ensure continuous improvement.

AGREED RESPONSE

This is accepted and further training of front line staff is linked to the workforce development work coordinated by the Head of Professional Development.

The role of youth services

Recommendation 9*

OCYPS consider how it can work more closely with other authorities and organisations to:

- Extend good practice in preventive substance misuse work and promote shared learning across the youth service
- Ensure youth workers have appropriate training and access to expert advice in relation to dealing with drug and alcohol misuse
- Help provide early preventive intervention through youth work to young people at risk, including pre-teens

AGREED RESPONSE

The Young People's Coordinator has met with the Locality Team Managers and has also worked with the workforce development leads. There are local substance misuse forums, which promote networking and good practice.

The role of Pupil Referral Units

Recommendation 10

OCYPS work with partners to strengthen transitional and out of term support for young people referred to Pupil Referral Units who would benefit from this.

AGREED RESPONSE

The funding for additional targeted work is limited but efforts to engage young people from the Pupil Referral Units are made where possible either through the Positive Activities for Young People Grant or through Connexions based and locality initiatives. A pilot of transition work funded by the Learning and Skills Council is planned for September 08.

Young Carers

Recommendation 11*

- The County Council develop a strategy and identify resources that will strengthen the support provided to young carers. This should include continuing to allocate a minimum of 20% of the Carers Grant in future years to support young carers, in line with national guidance.
- Future funding arrangements with independent organisations for carer support are based on 3-year contractual agreements that will help provide financial stability and clarify mutual expectations.

AGREED RESPONSE

A review of work with Young Carers is in progress. A strategy will be agreed early next year with new commissioning arrangements likely to come into effect in the autumn. The three current providers are working with the strategy author and the work will progress to the Extended Services PDG in January for consultation with Members.

Black and minority ethnic young people

Recommendation 12*

- The DAAT partner agencies identify the information and support needs of young people from migrant worker and other minority ethnic communities in 2008, and incorporate these and how they will be addressed in the Young People's Substance Misuse Strategy and Action Plans from 2009 onwards.
- Preventive work with young travellers is sustained and developed in future years.

AGREED RESPONSE

The DAAT has identified issues to address with the adult migrant worker population such as increased prevalence of blood borne virus but this is beyond the scope of this review. The DAAT has produced materials specifically for use by the Traveller population but currently does not have funding to continue this work. The development of Information Advice and Guidance for young people in conjunction with the Youth Offer will ensure that information regarding services is widely available, including minority ethnic groups. Further work in this area may be possible to develop through the DAAT Information Officer and the Community Development Worker who is picking up migrant worker issues.

Looked after children

Recommendation 13*

The County Council widen the employment opportunities for care leavers through promoting access to Council employment, exploring the feasibility of setting up a trainee scheme for young care leavers that would provide them with work experience and skills, and working with its suppliers and contractors to provide opportunities.

AGREED RESPONSE

The Corporate Parenting Steering Group will take up this work.

Children of drug and alcohol misusing parents

Recommendation 14

That OCYPS and Adult Support Services work with each other and with partners, including schools, to identify how they can utilise available resources more effectively to improve early identification and support of:

- Children at risk of substance misuse
- Children with substance misusing parents

AGREED RESPONSE

The 2003 Drug Misuse Advisory Council report 'Hidden Harm' required the Local Authority and its partners to review how the needs of children with substance misusing parents were being met. In 2004 an action plan was created. However this work requires updating and reinvigorating. A report on Hidden Harm was taken to the Local Safeguarding Board Business Committee on the 11th December. The Committee agreed to take a policy lead on this work and to update the action plan accordingly.