

Delegated Decision

11 May 2020

Grant for Support for Social Car Scheme



Report of Geoff Paul, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To approve the award of a grant to Supportive of £32,657.95 for the support of a countywide social car scheme.

Executive summary

- 2 Supportive are a registered charity providing a social car scheme in various parts of the county for vulnerable people and those who have mobility problems who are unable to use conventional public transport through the use of volunteer drivers.
- 3 While Supportive are funded by some Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) to provide schemes large parts of the county are without any such funded service.
- 4 In those areas of the county that do not have a funded scheme, Supportive still try to provide a service, funded by their own charity work and a small charge to the user.
- 5 Durham County Council are currently undertaking a review of the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services with a view to develop a more cost effective model that maintains or improves effectiveness and involves the increased use of volunteer drivers.
- 6 This report seeks approval to award a grant to Supportive to sustain the "unfunded" elements of the Supportive scheme during the review until a countywide scheme can be procured.

Recommendation

- 7 To approve the award of a grant for £32,657.95 to Supportive to support their countywide volunteer driver scheme.

Background

- 8 Supportive are a registered charity and not for profit organisation founded in 1994 to support people in County Durham to live full and active lives with the freedom of choice in their own future.
- 9 Part of the service the organisation offers is a social car scheme for vulnerable people and those who have mobility problems who are unable to use conventional public transport through the use of volunteer drivers.
- 10 While Supportive provide schemes in certain AAPs areas, for which they are funded, not only are there specific eligibility criteria attached to these schemes, meaning that some vulnerable people cannot use the service, but there are large parts of the county without any such service. Notwithstanding this fact, Supportive still seek to provide a service for these people, funded by their own charity work and a small charge to the user.
- 11 Even with this income Supportive are losing money on this valued service.

Context

- 12 Volunteer driver organisations are valued by Durham County Council and recognise the importance of such organisations and the services they offer to society.
- 13 In an effort to develop a more sustainable model, the Integrated Passenger Transport Group are undertaking a review of the DRT service they provide with a view to develop a more cost effective model that maintains or improves effectiveness and considers the increased use of volunteer drivers.
- 14 This review is ongoing but any proposed change to the service (which would be subject to public consultation and Cabinet approval) is unlikely to be implemented in the next 12 months.

Conclusion

- 15 In the meantime, it is proposed to procure the services of a volunteer car organisation through a temporary contract to sustain the existing level of service until the introduction of this new service.
- 16 This report seeks approval to award a grant to Supportive to sustain the service until this temporary contract is in place.

Finance

- 17 The grant of £32,657.95 will cover the shortfall of the cost (net of income) for those passenger journeys that fall outside of the existing AAP schemes.

Background papers

- None.

Other useful documents

- None.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

The recommendation seeks to pay a grant of £32,657.95 to be funded from existing budgets within Transport & Contract Services.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.