
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	11 OCTOBER, 2001	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	RICHARD GROVES (EXTN. 5738)	DOC: (c:\myfiles\richard\Committees\FM2.doc)
SUBJECT:	RURAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: DS 11

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Members express support for the initiative and agree to provide office space at the Civic Offices for use by the Partnership Officer over the period to 31 March, 2004.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To obtain a Committee resolution concerning the proposed Rural Transport Partnership initiative.

3.0 Detail

3.1 It has been proposed by The Countryside Agency that a Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) covering South Derbyshire District and Erewash Borough be established.

3.2 The RTP scheme is operated and funded by the Countryside Agency and provides grants for rural transport services and facilities. Support can be provided for all types of transport projects including those involving cars, buses, rail, cycling and walking. Projects that reduce the need to travel, such as mobile services, can also be supported.

3.3 The initiative promotes the formation of partnerships, comprising local authorities, voluntary and private sector groups, rural community councils and others, where partners can take a joint view of the transport needs of local communities and develop projects to meet those needs. Groups can also apply for funding without being part of a local RTP although any such projects must be evaluated by the RTP to ensure consistency with its Action Plan.

3.4 A Partnership Officer is appointed by the RTP to liaise with local communities and service providers in the preparation of an Action Plan, evaluating the present situation and setting out proposals for improvement. The Plan provides a basis for developing projects and applying to the Countryside Agency and other organisations for funding.

3.5 Countryside Agency funding comprises the following:

- (i) support for the funding of the Partnership Officer, representing up to 75% of the total cost
- (ii) up to £250,000 toward the cost of projects developed by the RTP or other organisations, representing up to 75% of the cost of each project
- (iii) a delegated fund of up to a further £10,000 each year for small scale transport projects, providing funding for up to 75% of the cost of each project, or 100% for projects costing less than £1000 in total

3.6 It is anticipated that other partners and agencies in a local scheme would include Derbyshire County Council, Erewash Borough Council, the National Forest, Derbyshire Rural Community Council, the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields Priority Area Partnership and the Southern Derbyshire Health Authority. All existing rural transport schemes, including Community Transport and Public Transport Bus Quality Partnership initiatives would be considered as part of the overall strategy to be set out in the Action Plan

3.7 It has been proposed that a Partnership Officer be appointed by the local RTP before the end of the current calendar year to produce an Action Plan by Summer, 2002. The RTP would run until 31 March, 2004, at which point the national scheme is to be discontinued.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 It is anticipated that the cost of employing a Partnership Officer will be around £38,000 per annum including on-costs of which 25% of the total, or around £9,500, will need to be identified by the RTP. Funding contributions are being sought from all the potential partner organisations set out in para. 3.5.

4.2 The Countryside Agency has indicated that contributions in kind can be considered as part of the match funding package. Office space could be provided by the Community and Leisure Development Division, any costs associated with the use of telephones or other equipment to be borne by the RTP. The Countryside Agency have indicated that the cost of office rental can be considered as representing a contribution of £1,500, maximum.

4.3 In addition, a financial contribution in the sum of £500 for the first year of operation is to be sought from the Crime and Disorder Partnership Support budget.

4.4 It is expected that match funding contributions toward specific transport projects will not be sought from the District Council.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 The RTP proposal has potential implications for the Community and Leisure Development, Economic Development and Planning divisions of the Council in terms of benefits.

5.2 Office space is available in the Community and Leisure Development Division to accommodate a Partnership Officer, whose involvement in the project would overcome any need for substantial input from Council staff.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The aim of the RTP initiative is to secure long-term improvement in access to jobs, services and social activities in rural areas and sustainable access to the countryside for leisure and tourism purposes.
- 6.2 The enhancement of access to social and leisure facilities for young people living in rural areas may assist in the delivery of Crime and Disorder Strategy objectives, hence the proposal to obtain a funding contribution from the associated budget.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The initiative would contribute towards the following Council objectives:
- (i) to provide leadership in the community involving all citizens in decision making
 - (ii) to promote the sustainable economic and community development of South Derbyshire addressing social exclusion and equality of opportunity
 - (iii) to protect and promote a sustainable environment
 - (iv) to identify and address the transport needs of the District
 - (v) to secure high quality, value for money services
 - (vi) to work in partnership with organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote the safety and welfare of life in the community
- 7.2 In summary, the initiative has potential to yield significant benefits furthering a number of Council objectives and, from the local perspective, appears to represent very good value.

10.0 Background Papers

"Information Sheet 4: The Rural Transport Partnership Scheme"

The Countryside Agency,
2001

