

Overview and Scrutiny

27th October 2010

REPORT TITLE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr C Gandy
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report contains the recommendations for the future delivery of the Council's Dial a Ride Service. The Council commissioned an independent review of the service which was carried out by JMP Consulting Agency. (Already circulated). This review was undertaken due to the current climate of reducing budgets, the impending Government Comprehensive Spending Review and the requirement to look at the sustainability and resilience of the service in future years.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.2 The DAR service provides affordable travel around Redditch for people who cannot use public transport. It enables people to maintain independent living, giving customers an improved quality of life with easy access to health care, shopping and social events. This in turn has a positive impact on the mental health and well being of customers, helping to ensure they have a healthy and sustainable lifestyle long into their old age; whilst guaranteeing social inclusion.
- 2.3 The Council over a period of time have looked at the long term sustainability of DAR and have been working with the DAR Task and Finish Group to improve resilience, performance and cost effectiveness of the service
- 2.4 The continuing reduction in grant funding and increased pressures on public spending has highlighted a need for an independent review of the current Dial a Ride service.
- 2.5 JMP consultants were engaged to review the DAR service to look in depth at the operation of, and demands for, DAR. This included current policy, organisational structures, operation and deployment of vehicles and drivers, costs and revenue, models of provision, bookings management, demands and needs, user profile and patterns of usage, accessibility considerations, and the eligibility to use the service.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 There will be increasing costs due to the age of the fleet of minibuses. There are 6 minibuses that are between 5 and 8.5 years old. As a result there is the need to invest in a new fleet over the next 2-3 years. The expected date of the first 3 buses to be replaced will in be in year2011/2012 and will be part of the ongoing vehicle replacement plan
- 3.2 Worcestershire County Council have agreed to loan Redditch Borough Council two 6 seater vehicles to assess whether a mix of vehicles would be more cost affective for smaller groups or individual travellers. This pilot will run from the 1st of October to the 31st of March and we will have the option to extend further if all information required has not been collected.
- 3.3 There is a need to investigate further opportunities for additional types of provision which would include the hire of vehicles to community groups, register for contracts with Worcestershire County Council and have the option to have a mixed fleet of vehicles.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 By not acting on the recommendations of the JMP report a sustainable budget for service delivery is unlikely to be achieved. However if there is investment in new vehicles, increase to fares as suggested and the opportunity to work with other providers/partners a more positive outcome could be achieved.
- 4.2 An investment for 3 minibuses will be required in year 11/12 which is highlighted in the vehicle replacement programme. The cost of 3 adapted minibuses is £31,000 each with the depreciation showing as a revenue cost of £4429 plus MRP of £1,395 (£5,823 annually).
- 4.3 Concessionary Fares will be moving to Worcestershire County Council and there is a likelihood that the before 9.30 travel may be excluded from the provision of free travel. This may have an impact on DAR journeys as more customers would want to use the service before 9.30. There is also the possibility of being grant funded, from WCC, for the concessionary travel element instead of recharging the passenger journeys through the Councils in-house finance section. This has yet to be decided at County level. The Concessionary Fares Scheme will be passed to WCC on the 1st of April 2011.
- 4.4 By increasing the concessionary fare to £1.60, and based on 2009/2010 passenger figures of 33,842, the additional revenue raised would be an

extra £18,613 (an additional 55p per passenger). From April next year if the fares are increased, and based on the figures for 2009/10 the actual revenue would be £54,147

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

All contracts with partners/others will be subject to a detailed Service Level Agreement which will require the endorsement of the Council.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The current Dial a Ride Policy was last updated in 2006. The Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy 2007-2011 would form the basis of setting a specific policy for Dial a Ride.

6.2 Community Transport is supported by Worcestershire County Council policies through their Local Transport Plan and will provide opportunity to work closely and engage with Joint Members Transport Forum and Community Transport (CT) partnership.

7. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

7.1 Enterprising community – Customers frequent the Kingfisher Shopping centre and local small business for personal care or shopping enabling those generally excluded to contribute to the wider society within Redditch

7.2 Clean and Green - Reduction in CO2 emissions could be achieved by purchasing new/smaller vehicles and maximising capacity.

7.3 Well managed organisation – Staff training on how to link trips and connect passengers to ensure the vehicles are used efficiently

7.3 In addition the DAR supports the Redditch Partnership's priority to improve health inequalities. The service provides affordable travel around Redditch for people who cannot use public transport and enables people to maintain independent living, giving customers an improved quality of life with easy access to health care

8. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Overview and Scrutiny

27th October 2010

- 8.1 Failure to approve the recommendations will make it difficult for the Council to achieve a sustainable service.
- 8.2 The impact of the loss of the Dial a Ride Service will be;
- (a) customers will become socially isolated;
 - (b) customers health and well being will be severely affected;
 - (c) loss of staff; and
 - (d) a reduction in the level or loss of the DAR service currently provided, may lead to negative customer feedback and media reports which could be politically damaging to elected Members.

9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Reduction or loss of service will affect well being and the quality of life for those who use the service. Deterioration in health may occur if clients can not attend clinics or appointments to help people remain fit and healthy
- 9.2 Independence will be affected for the most vulnerable who attend groups or clubs and cannot go due to cost of alternative travel options. This will also reduce attendance of people and may result in the clubs unable to continue due to diminishing customers.

10. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Social exclusion for those who rely on door to door transport to attend social events, shopping trips and luncheon clubs
- 10.2 The cost of travel for those who need door to door transport would increase as private hire would have to be used by those who could not use public transport because of a disability
- 10.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (Appendix 1. has been completed for the current service and a Predictive Equality Impact Assessment (PEIA) to look at the impact to customers should the service be dissolved. (Appendix 2).

11. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Overview and Scrutiny

27th October 2010

11.1 The JMP report states that as a Community Transport provider we are comparable to others in the delivery of the service. There has been a partial allowance for depreciation and replacement of vehicles (shown as a revenue contribution to capital charges) this figure is £27,750 for 2010/11. However a capital investment in new vehicles needs to be considered if the service is to continue.

11.2 All orders for vehicle replacement issued to manufacturers will be tendered for on the open market within Standing order 46 Procurement guide lines. This will safeguard the Council's budgets and quality of work.

12. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

12.1 CO2 emissions will be lower with new or smaller buses

12.2 Maximising capacity on buses by leaner working and improving procedures and policies to allow for better use of resources

13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The possible integration of BURT administration and operations may have an affect on staffing and resources.

14. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes will assist the Council to make better use of the DAR service maximising capacity which will have a positive impact on its performance and increase the revenue to the Authority.

15. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The Council, as is duty bound, has considered crime and disorder implications, none have been identified.

16. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

16.1 Access to clinics such as chiropody, Asthma, Stroke etc will be affected as local bus routes may be infrequent or not on the same route as the clinic.

16.2 Unable to attend Medical appointments – Customers may wait longer before they are treated due to the cost of alternative door to door transport (taxis) this will have an impact on their health and well being which could add to the cost of care in the long term

16.3 Unable to attend social activities or groups such as Age Concern or St David's Luncheon Club which would severely affect the mental health, well being and independence of our customers.

17. LESSONS LEARNT

17.1 Comparisons are made in the JMP report to other Community Transport providers which have shown that most Community Transport providers are comparable to Redditch DAR.

17.2 The need to work closely with Worcestershire County Council and the County transport forums is a high priority as it will enable us to consider the county wide provision of Community Transport and how we can diversify to increase revenue through securing small contracts and alternative funding streams.

18. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

18.1 Customers have been engaged through residential consultation on their views on DAR and how they valued the service.

18.2 Task and Finish group has been suspended until the review of DAR has been completed and recommendations of the JMP report have been assessed.

19. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes

Overview and Scrutiny

27th October 2010

Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

20. WARDS AFFECTED

All.

21. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Current Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2 - Predictive Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 3 – Review of Dial a Ride (Presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 6th October).

22. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Task and Finish Group's Work.
Concessionary Fares Bulletins.

23. KEY

RBC	Redditch Borough Council
BDC	Bromsgrove District Council
DAR	Dial a Ride
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
JMP	JMP Consultants
WRVS	Women's Royal Voluntary Service
BURT	Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport
CT	Community Transport
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
PEIA	Predictive Equality Impact Assessment

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Ruth Griffin

E Mail: ruth.griffin@redditchbc.gov.uk

Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3705