

DIAL A RIDE EXTENDED SERVICE – FEASIBILITY STUDY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Greg Chance, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development and Transport.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To investigate the option of using Dial a Ride Vehicles to transport young people to local events or festivals.
- 1.2 To utilise Dial a Ride vehicles at weekends and nights and hiring them to other groups with transport needs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asking the Executive Committee to RESOLVE that

- 1) the Dial-a-Ride scheme operated under a permit issued under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985, be extended to include making the Dial-a-Ride vehicles available to those community organisations registered with the Council for use during evenings and weekends;**
- 2) that the charging schedule as set out in Appendix 1 be adopted; and**
- 3) that the scheme is based on the examples presented in appendix 2;**
- 4) subject to the extended Dial a Ride scheme being approved, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a monitoring update report on the subject 12 months after the introduction of the scheme.**

3. KEY ISSUES

BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the Youth Services Provision Task Group report being presented to Executive Committee on the 24th of April 2012, officers were requested to explore the option of Dial a Ride vehicles being used to transport young people to local events and festivities and a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 3.2 The Task Group felt that it was possible that a group of volunteers might be willing to assume responsibility for transporting young people.
- 3.3 The Task Group were proposing that Dial a Ride vehicles be made available for one off events, such as the Morton Stanley Festival, to transport young people to and from the venue.
- 3.4 The group wanted it to be made clear that the Dial a Ride vehicles would need to be booked in advance.
- 3.5 It would be possible to introduce this scheme on the basis of the organisation using the vehicle with or without a Dial a Ride driver.
- 3.6 There are two options that could be adopted for operating the service.
- a) Volunteer drivers: It was proposed by the group that we might consider volunteers driving the vehicles on behalf of Redditch Borough Council for these purposes. However, due to the associated management and administrative time and costs in setting this up and administering this process this option is not considered appropriate.
 - b) Groups with their own drivers: Groups registered and using the vehicles can recruit their own drivers (paid or unpaid) who would have to provide the necessary paperwork to drive (i.e. D1 entitlement on their driving licence, Midas training for minibus drivers, Enhanced CRB check and, if there are people travelling in wheelchairs, confirmation of the Wheel Chair Clamping and Smoke Evacuation competency).
- 3.7 Parking of a vehicle in a safe and secure area when the depot is closed would be the responsibility of the organisation using the vehicle as would be the funding and recovery of broken down vehicles.
- 3.8 A vehicle being used under a section 19 permit must not carry members of the general public and can only be used for members of the body holding the permits. Consequently any external agencies would have to register with Dial a Ride before they could use the vehicles.
- 3.9 It would be the responsibility of the organisation or department of RBC using the vehicle for any repairs or recovery of vehicles whilst the vehicle was in their charge. An agreement would have to be drawn up which would have to be signed prior to the use of the vehicle.

Financial Implications

- 3.9 The charging schedule for the service is detailed in Appendix 1. There are 4 examples of costs for group use of vehicles at Appendix 2 showing Members how much it would cost to transport passengers to an event on a Saturday.
- 3.10 Officers have researched other schemes that can offer their vehicles in downtimes. An example of one of the schemes is at Appendix 3.
- 3.11 There would be no loss of income to Dial a Ride as this service would be operating outside normal operating hours. The normal operating hours are 08.25 to 16.45 Monday to Friday.
- 3.12 In the case of the vehicle breaking down outside of the Crossgates Depot opening hours (i.e. weekends or evenings), recovery of vehicle could be expensive but would be the responsibility of the department of RBC or the outside organisation to cover the full costs of recovery

Legal Implications

- 3.13 There would need to be an agreement for use of the vehicle which would be drafted if Members wish to introduce the scheme.
- 3.14 Section 19 permits are either 'standard permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry no more than 16 passengers (excluding the driver) or 'large bus permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry 17 or more passengers. These permits may be granted to organisations who operate vehicles without a view to profit to transport their members or people whom the organisation exists to help. Section 19 permit vehicles cannot be used to carry members of the general public.
- 3.15 A vehicle being used under a section 19 permit must not carry members of the general public and can only be used for members of the body holding the permits. Consequently any external agencies would have to register with Dial a Ride before they could use the vehicles.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.16 The existing Dial a Ride policy states that a person is eligible for Dial a Ride if they are a resident of Redditch and, in order to carry out normal activities, are unable to drive a vehicle or to use public transport, because of a severely impaired ability to walk.
- 3.17 As this would be an additional service offered, then a change of the Dial a Ride policy would be required to allow charitable groups and associations, use of the vehicles and to extend service to include young people for the purpose of accessing youth activities at full cost recovery.

- 3.18 Any breakdowns over the week end could result in a Dial a Ride minibus off the run and unable to meet our passenger needs: for example this could affect the health of our clients if we cannot take them to their clinic, Hospital or Doctors appointments.
- 3.19 In relation to climate change implications there could be a potential to reduce the number of cars dropping off young people by their parents. The minibuses have 9 seats so can move a large group of people rather than individuals.
- 3.20 There could also be human resources implications. Change in terms and conditions for existing drivers would be needed to include driving outside of their normal hours. Holiday entitlement and sickness costs would also need to be considered. There is the potential that recruitment of additional staff would be required if we offered a mini bus and a driver. Additional office based staff would be required to provide administration and support out of normal working hours.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.21 This scheme would enable young people to access events within the Redditch boundaries by providing transport.
- 3.22 All Dial a Ride vehicles are accessible minibuses which will allow young people who have poor or restricted mobility the opportunity to travel to these events as well.
- 3.23 In relation to the community safety implications of this proposal if young people are diverted to organise youth activities it could have the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour. More joined working would need to be done with a youth inclusion officer from West Mercia if Members agree this scheme.
- 3.24 The proposal would also enable young people to access cultural, health and sport related youth activities which could improve their health and well being.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There would be risks to the authority regarding passengers and pedestrians when accidents occur in respect of reputation. Risk assessments would be the responsibility of the organisation using the vehicle and copies would be required as part of the signed agreements. In respect of any liability please see 4.3
- 4.2 Support procedures would need to be put in place for staff who could be lone working when the office and Crossgates Depot is shut.
- 4.3 Officers have consulted with the Council's insurance officer who has confirmed the wording of our insurance policy which reads: *Any person who is driving on the order or with the permission of the Policyholder. This covers RBC drivers and other organisations that have registered with us.*

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Example of Charging Schedule for using Dial a Ride vehicles.

Appendix 2 - Example of costs for journeys

Appendix 2 - Example of City of Plymouth Community Hire Scheme.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Section 19 permits are either 'standard permits' for vehicles, which are adapted to carry no more than 16 passengers (excluding the driver), or 'large bus permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry 17 or more passengers. These permits may be granted to organisations who operate vehicles without a view to profit to transport their members or people whom the organisation exists to help. Section 19 permit vehicles cannot be used to carry members of the general public. (VOSA Passenger Transport provided under Section 19 or 22 permits – Section 18 to 23A of the Transport Act 1985).

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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