

South Somerset Community Accessible Transport Bus – Allocation of Revenue Grant Funding for 2022/23 (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To consider the allocation of funding to South Somerset Community Accessible Transport Bus (SSCAT bus)

Public Interest

Supporting the SSCAT bus to provide a contribution towards the social car service, providing transport to hospital/doctor appointments in the towns and villages across Area East.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

1. Award £10,000 to South Somerset Community Accessible Transport Bus for the delivery of the social car service from the Area East Discretionary/Project budget

Background

This community transport scheme was started in June 2002 with a 3-year grant from Rural Bus Challenge. It was initially under council control, and subsequently became an independent limited company registered as a charity in April 2004. There are four aspects to the scheme:-

- A demand-responsive Ring & Ride service throughout the area
- Group hire of minibuses with drivers
- Contract work with schools
- A Social Car scheme using volunteer drivers in their own cars to provide transport for members to hospital/doctor appointments

In February 2022, members received the annual progress report from the Operational Manager of the SSCAT bus. He gave members a full update, explaining that they were



starting to see an increase in the number of CAT bus users, although it is encouraging the year would still be challenging financially.

It was proposed that Area East continue to fully support the CAT bus, provide financial and management advice where appropriate and that members would urge the new council to continue to support and fund the CAT bus.

Progress

In line with the discussion in February 2022, meetings have taken place with the Operational Manager to consider the way forward and how best to support the CAT bus.

SSCAT generates income through contracts, membership and fares and also has a good track record of fundraising through grant applications. However, despite the SSCAT best efforts they currently are only able to cover their day-to-day running costs. This has become increasingly more difficult with the soaring fuel prices.

Supporting the social car service, which provides transport to hospital/doctor appointments in the towns and villages across area east would increase their financial sustainability. On average this scheme provides 174 journeys per month, it has 24 volunteer drivers and provides transport to the most vulnerable. Presently this service has no funding and uses a considerable amount of office hours.

Financial Implications

There is currently £20,290 uncommitted Discretionary/Project budget in Area East Reserve.

If members choose to support the recommendations contained in this report, it will mean that there is £10,290 budget unallocated.

Council Plan Implications

Healthy, self-reliant Communities – Priority 2

To enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life

- Work with partners to keep our residents safe and feel safe in their homes and communities
- Collaborate with local partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of community
- Work with local partners to support people in improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
- Enable quality and inclusive cultural, leisure and sport activities



- Proactively support residents facing hardship and tackle the causes of economic & social exclusion, poverty and low social mobility

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Providing local access to a range of activities and services reducing the need to travel which therefore reduces carbon emissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	No
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	